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[CAPTAIN WYNNE'S CONFLICT WITH THE SMUGGLERS.]

THE MAID OF MONA.

By LEON LEWIS.

CHAPTER I.

THE FISHER'S DAUGHTER.

Give her sorrow leave to talk!
Let her complain! mingle your tears with hers,
For she hath suffered a deep anguish! But
She'll rise superior to it!

Goethe.

The Isle of Man, at present noted for its herring fishery, and formerly notorious for its contraband trade, has witnessed many of those stirring scenes which vivify history, and has produced many of the noblest men and women that adorn British annals. Geographically the centre of the United Kingdom, and near enough to England, Scotland, and Ireland to share their characteristics, but, at the same time, sufficiently isolated to possess many features peculiar to itself, it is presented prominently to our notice as an object of vivid interest to every reader.

The history of Mona, therefore, has been placed under contribution for the particulars woven into our story. The sun of a summer afternoon was declining through mists and vapours, and looking like a monstrous eye brooding on darkness and evil. A portentous gloom was in the sky, which seemed to hang low upon the land and sea; and there was a fitful gustiness in the damp breeze that forwarned old fishermen of a rough night. The seamews flew high, as is customary when foul weather is brewing, and screamed noisily above the rocks of the coasts; while the hollow moaning and swashing of the sea, under the meeting of currents and counter-currents, which there was not wind enough to steady, all suggested chances of an impending tempest.

In the midst of these portentous a man of massive frame, but of coarse and repulsive aspect, clad in the usual garb of a Manx fisherman, sat on the steps of one of the dozen little cabins that composed the village of Port St. Mary, in the Isle of Man. He was of

middle age, but looked older, owing to the hardened and vicious cast of his features. He was singularly abstracted for the moment; but this circumstance did not prevent him from mending a net, which task he pursued mechanically, if not indeed savagely, and appearing oblivious of everything around him.

He was Nate Maxley, one of the fishers of the village. The scene in which he figured, although characteristic, was unromantic. Several sails dotted the surface of the sea here and there, besides the fishing craft rocking idly in the bay, and a number of boats were drawn up on the beach in front of the village. The harbour lighthouse loomed conspicuously beyond them, towering up tall and white. A group of children was visible in the principal street, and several adult inhabitants, including two women, were busy near their dwellings.

The face of Maxley, as he continued his work, became more and more expressive of his reflections, which were clearly of a disagreeable nature. Dissatisfaction with his lot, envy of others, and disgust at everything and everybody, were the least objectionable of the emotions that revealed themselves upon his dark visage. At length, as some of the meshes of the net gave way under his rough handling, he started up impatiently, threw his repairing materials upon the ground, and stamped upon them furiously, as he muttered:

"A curse on this sort o' life! I've had enough of it! It's work, work, day and night, wearing rags, living poorly, going nowhere, being nobody, and having nothing! What's the use of all this labour? After years and years of it, I'm poorer'n a shotten herring! I'm the most unfortunate mortal living. A dog-fish breaks every net one day; and the next there's not a herring within ten leagues o' the island! Rot the luck! I'm sick and tired o' the whole business!"

The gleam that had now appeared in his eyes was almost ferocious. He kicked his net aside emphatically, resumed his seat, and mused:

"The time's come for a change o' diet. I'll turn smuggler, or pirate, or do anything that'll fill my

pockets with money. My first step is to bring Mona to her senses. I'll make a final effort. What's the use o' having a young and good-looking daughter if you can't make anything by'er? I've had enough of her objections and refusals. Once for all, she shall do as I tell'er. She shall be a married woman within a month, as sure's I'm living!"

As the irate and disgusted fisherman reached this conclusion, and brought his heavy hand down decisively on his knee, a young and beautiful girl, scarcely more than a child in years, appeared on the threshold of the cabin immediately behind him.

She was his only child, who had been named, rather oddly, in one of his freaks, after his wife's death, from the island.

The violet which hides among mosses is not more fresh and delicate in its charms than was this artless and pure-souled maiden.

By contrast with her dark-faced and scowling parent, as he turned towards her, she looked like an angel of light.

She was a little above the medium height, with a slight but well-rounded form, which was as lithe and graceful as a tender willow. Her face was full and oval, her eyes large and radiant, and her features of the finest proportions of beauty. Her hair was of a golden brown, and fell around her snow-white neck in a profusion of curls. Her cheeks were rosy with health, her teeth like pearls, her hands and feet small, and her whole person perfect. Added to these attractions was a voice like the sweetest of music.

She was neatly but plainly dressed, wearing a modest little hat, a short-waisted, and short-skirted dress, and a quaint little cape that was pinned tightly around her shoulders.

But it was the jewel in this rare casket, the soul in this beautiful form, that at once claimed attention and admiration, speaking from her expressive eyes and features. A glance at her countenance was enough to show that she was endowed with unusual intelligence and feeling, and that she was as sensitive as a delicate flower in her nervous organization. For this superior moral and spiritual nature she was indebted to her mother. She was as good as she was beautiful.

ful, and as useful as ornamental. By general testimony and consent she was the belle of the coast, the favourite of all who knew her, the good angel of many an afflicted household, and a ministering spirit to many a weary soul, doing all she could for the comfort and consolation of those who sorrowed.

Glorious little Mona!

It was no wonder that the masses of the people, whose hearts are ever so grateful for kindness, regarded her as an angel of mercy.

Of late there had been evils in her lot, developments within her spirit, disagreements between her and her father, which had left some signs of care and sadness on her countenance; and it was easy to see, as she thus appeared rather timidly in his presence, that her soul was troubled, unrestful, full of yearnings, and oppressed with a sense of desolation and with forebodings for her future.

"Humph! here you are, just in time to hear my views on an important matter," was the instant greeting of Maxley. "I'm disgusted with fishing, and have made up my mind to be a smuggler!"

"No, no, father," said Mona, with a pained and anguished look. "You cannot mean it!"

"But I do, though," he declared, in a bitter tone. "There's no better business going. I know scores upon scores of men who are making themselves rich by it. There's Brottie, Dickson, Peel, and half a dozen others, within nine miles of us, who are coining hundreds of pounds yearly. They tell me I'm a fool to waste my time on a few herrings. Why, some of our best men think that we have a right to smuggle, considering our relations to England!"

"They err," rejoined Mona. "You yourself know that smuggling is wrong, or you would not have waited till now to enter upon it. England bought our sovereignty at our own price, and has given us the protection of wise and good laws. These laws must be respected, or else farewell to all peace, honour, or happiness. Besides this consideration, look at the results that follow in the train of smuggling. It is an open gate to every species of violence and depravity. Think of the terrible Fearnought, the chief of the brotherhood of smugglers, who is in practice a remorseless pirate, and the destroyer of untold numbers of revenue officers and seamen who have sought to capture him. Think of his lawless cruelties, how he has carried off women, and even young girls, from the shores of the United Kingdom to his retreats in distant islands! It is terrible, father, a terrible sin for you to think of associating yourself with such men!"

"I don't think of anything of the kind," retorted Maxley. "I merely wish to do a little trading in a civil way, without injury to anything or anybody. As to Fearnought, I don't approve of his wickedness no more than you do. He's been a free-trader so long that he's grown a little too free in his manners."

"That is a natural result of smuggling. It gradually breaks down a man's virtues, and gives his vices prominence. Don't think of being a smuggler, father—I implore you!"

"But I must do something," declared Maxley. "The herring fishery is not profitable enough for my purpose."

"It is at least honest, and sufficient for our comfort," rejoined Mona. "Why give way to these wild temptations? I had hoped—"

"Yes, hoped to bring me to your wishes," interrupted Maxley, with increasing bitterness. "If you had married any one of your many suitors, I should have possessed a rich son-in-law, and could have lived at my ease. But no, you must fall in love with a prowling revenue officer, an enemy of our people, and you have no eyes or ears for anyone else. Now, you shall quit this folly. There are plenty of substantial men around us, old neighbours, people we know, who want you, and you shall make a choice from them. I won't be trifled with longer, I'll—"

"But, father," interrupted Mona, pleadingly, "I cannot love any of those to whom you refer. Wait a few days. You misjudge Noel. I am sure he will return soon."

"No, he never will come back here," retorted Maxley. "He knows better. The freetraders have learned who and what he is, and would kill him at sight without wasting words upon him. You'll never see him again—never, never!"

The brutal satisfaction expressed in Maxley's tone, and the exultation of his manner, struck a chill to the heart of the listener, and filled her with terrible anxieties and suspicions.

"You must have heard something," she faltered, with quivering lips, "to speak in this way about him."

"I have heard something," he declared, turning upon her with ill-concealed joy. "What can you expect? 'They that take the sword shall perish by the sword.' Your revenue friend came here, disguised as a fisherman, to spy out what he could about the contraband trade of the island. He picked up a little information, got track of some smugglers, fol-

lowed them to France, had a fight with them, and was killed by them!"

"No, no!" moaned the listener.

"It is as I tell you. I have known it a month. Brottie told me all about it, and he had it from some of the men who were in the fight!"

Mona gazed long and earnestly upon the jubilant face of the speaker—long enough to see that he believed what he was asserting, and then she burst into a fit of weeping that was terrible to witness. Maxley said nothing to her until her grief had exhausted its first violence, and she was beginning to acquire control over her feelings.

"And since he is gone," he then said, "I want you to turn your thoughts to some one else—to some of your other admirers!"

"Oh, no—never!" moaned the maiden, in broken tones. "He has been too dear to me to ever be supplanted. To have known him is to be disqualified from ever loving another. Better the memory of him than all other affections. It was through him that I learned the blessedness of living. For him I can wait—wait till the great life eternal!"

Harden as he was, Maxley could not be entirely insensible to her terrible grief, and he accordingly said:

"Well, we won't quarrel about the matter at present. While you are cooling yourself, I'll go and see Brottie, get full particulars, and make preparations for business!"

He turned away abruptly, going towards Port Erin, and was soon out of Mona's sight and hearing, on the solitary road between the two villages.

A deep shadow gathered on his face. As the preceding scene has shown, he was rough and brutal, and in almost every respect the very opposite of Mona.

His reputation was as bad as hers was good, although no serious crime had actually been traced home to him.

"Like her mother, she's too good for this world," he muttered. "I don't know as I shall be able to do anything with her. Whether I do or not, there can be no harm in making a voyage with Brottie!"

Thus muttering, he trudged on.

CHAPTER II.

CAPTAIN WYNN.

Yes, love indeed is light from heaven,
A spark of that immortal fire
With angels shared, by Allah given,
To lift from earth our low desire.
Devotion waits the mind above,
But heaven itself descends in love!

The Gravour.

And as the stars unto their nightly course are true,
So will I be to thee.

Anon.

The circumstances under which Mona's sorrow had arisen can be recorded in few words.

As indicated by Maxley, a young officer of the revenue service had come to the vicinity of Port St. Mary in the guise of a fisherman a short time previously, and devoted himself to the task of ferreting out the smugglers who had a retreat in that quarter. While thus engaged, he had made the acquaintance of Mona through some of her friends, and a mutual affection had at once arisen between the young couple.

On leaving the island, several weeks thereafter, he had promised to return in a month, but had failed to do so, nearly two months having passed since his departure. This delay had not been particularly painful to Mona, she having conceived satisfactory explanations of it.

The cruel revelations of her father, however, had now dispelled all her hopes and anticipations, and plunged her into the bitterest sorrow.

For some time she struggled with her grief, suffering anguish that was beyond expression; and, at length, calling all the consolations of faith and resignation to her aid, she became calm enough to think of taking a walk, with a view to the better mastery of her emotions. She accordingly left the cabin, entered a secluded path, and took her way across the solitude between the village and Spanish Head—so called from the fact that several vessels of the Spanish Armada were there dashed to pieces.

The path followed by the maiden rose continually, with more or less abruptness, above the level of the sea, finally leading her to the bold crags which constitute the head. Here she seated herself, looking around, but the mist was so thick that she could not see very far in any direction. For a few minutes she watched the seaweeds lying about the peaks, and then she commenced exploring the ravines and fissures around her, seeming to forget her grief in the contemplation of the various objects thus presented to her notice.

Suddenly she uttered a wild cry, and sank nearly fainting upon a hillock beside which she chanced to be passing.

She had seen a figure approaching at a little

distance, which she took to be the spirit of her lover.

Covering her face with her hands, she bowed her head upon her knees for a moment; but the sound of rapid footsteps that speedily fell upon her ear caused her to look up, and next, as the sounds deepened, to spring to her feet.

The form reached her, leaping over rocks and across fissures, and a glad light commenced breaking upon Mona's mind. The glowing and eager face, the beaming eyes, all the joy and affection written upon the loved features, told her the truth.

She beheld her lover!

Even as she tried to repress the wild cry of joy and relief that arose to her lips from her full heart, there was an answering cry, a few more hasty steps, and she was clasped to a manly bosom.

He lived! He was with her!

"My darling! my own precious Mona!" was the greeting that gladdened her heart. "What pleasure is it to see you!"

The maiden's joy was really too intense for any immediate verbal expression. She clung to the neck of her lover, wound her arms around him, pillowed her head on his breast, and sobbed with a violence which struck him as surprising.

"Oh, dear Noel! is it possible that you live—that I again see you?" she murmured, after a long and blissful embrace. "I have been grieved more than words can tell. Such a wicked falsehood has been told me! I believed you dead!"

"There has been some basis for the belief," was the reply, "for I have been very near to death's door. Let us sit down together upon these mosses, darling, and I will tell you all about it!"

The new-comer was about twenty-three years of age, of noble and commanding appearance, with an earnest and handsome face, clear and deep-searching eyes, and a hardy and agile frame.

He was Noel Wynne, a captain in the revenue service, of late on detached service, of the nature already known to the reader.

He was dressed in the garb of a Manx fisherman, over which he wore a cloak of such dimensions as to conceal his sword and pistol.

"How thin your features are!" exclaimed Mona, as they seated themselves in the spot indicated. "You have had an attack of sickness!"

"Yes, darling, as you shall hear. You are aware of the circumstances under which I left Manx some time ago. I had made some discoveries—in fact, obtained a clue which led me to most important results, which I will not pause to detail. Suffice it to say that we captured a score of smugglers, two vessels, and immense quantities of goods. As a drawback, a boat's crew of us had a fight by moonlight with a schooner we encountered unexpectedly, and I was left for dead, with a bullet in my left arm, and sword-thrust nearly through me!"

"How dreadful!" sighed Mona.

"Yes, in one sense, for these injuries kept me from returning to you in a month, as promised. There were several days during which my life was despaired of, but my good constitution and resolution, the doctor says, carried me through."

"And, at last, you are again here!" exclaimed Mona, caressing him impulsively. "I suppose that you are still hunting the smugglers?"

"Yes, dear, and this time I am on a scent that is worth pursuing. As if to reward me for my illness, the very day after I returned to duty I found myself in the wake of Fearnought himself, the great chief of the whole smuggling fraternity. Here again I will omit the details of the pursuit, as they would make a long story. Let it suffice to say that we followed Fearnought two weeks, finally hemming in his vessel, and that he and part of his crew barely escaped us by taking to a boat after nightfall. This was only five days ago, and from all we have since discovered, the fugitives came here."

"Here!" repeated Mona, with a start. "The terrible Fearnought lurking here?"

"Somewhere on the Manx coast, no doubt, and he will not find it easy to take his departure. We have a large fleet cruising near Man, and are determined that he shall not escape us. I came ashore alone last night, or rather early this morning, landing from the vessel of which I have the honour to be the commander. My object is to ferret out the hiding-places of Fearnought, if he is in the island. I have taken up my quarters in an almost inaccessible cave near here, and have stocked it with blankets and provisions. Of my caution you can judge when I tell you that you are the first person to whom I have spoken since my return to the island. I do not wish to be seen by any one who will place Fearnought on his guard. If successful in breaking up the smugglers, my reward would be worth having, for these fellows defraud the revenue to the amount of £350,000 yearly."

"So much? Astonishing!"

"Oh, it's an immense thing, this contraband

business. Why, the very captures we made on the Irish coast last year were worth over ten thousand pounds; this year we mean to do still better."

"But the peril, the continual exposure of your life," murmured Mona, with deep emotion, "is fearful to contemplate. You, may be wounded again, or even—"

Her voice broke down, her eyes filled with tears, and she took refuge in his bosom from the dark fear troubling her.

As the reader has already comprehended, the young couple were betrothed.

For half an hour or longer they discussed their hopes and purposes with each other, and then they made an appointment for the morrow, and separated with many a tender word and embrace, in order that the captain might return to his cave and the maiden to her home before the night had become too unpleasant. They had scarcely passed from the sight of each other when a third person emerged from a place of concealment among the crags from which he had been watching the lovers, and stole cautiously away in the direction taken by Captain Wynne.

CHAPTER III.

A MYSTERIOUS ENEMY.

There was a laughing devil in his sneer.
That raised emotions both of rage and fear,
And where his frown of hatred darkly fell,
Hope withering fled, and mercy sighed farewell.

The Corsair.

The man who had thus commenced dogging the steps of our hero was of strange and sinister appearance.

Tall, full six feet in height, and well-proportioned, with powerful shoulders and massive chest—with eyes in which blackness and brilliancy appeared struggling for the mastery, which seemed to pierce everything upon which they rested, with features that were almost classic, but bronzed by exposure to sea-breezes and to the sun, and further deepened by the seal that wrong-doing invariably leaves upon the face of its votary—with garments of the richest materials, including a jaunty cloak and cap, with pistols and knives in a belt at his waist, in addition to a heavy sword hanging at his side, with a profusion of diamonds on his fingers, in his bosom, and on his cuffs, and with an air at once bold, haughty and commanding, he presented a picture that, once seen, was not easy to be forgotten.

He carried in his hand a sea-glass.

Taking care to cover his movements from our hero by intervening rocks and bushes, he continued to follow him, in profound silence, for several minutes, with a sardonic smile playing over his features.

Suddenly he paused, uttering a low cry, which was clearly a signal, for a couple of rough-looking men, who evidently, from their garb and mien, followed the sea, emerged from a place of concealment behind an adjacent wall of volcanic rocks, and joined him.

"Did you see him?" he asked of them. "The man who has just passed to the westward?"

They replied that they had seen no one, not venturing to show themselves, although they had heard footsteps.

"Well, a glorious piece of good fortune has happened to us," proceeded the remarkable-looking personage we have described, who was regarded as a leader by his two companions. "While I was endeavouring to look through the fog, with the aid of the glass, from a post of observation I had chosen for the purpose, I beheld a lady and gentleman standing near me, and so interested in each other while they conversed that they had not seen me. Of the lady I need not speak, but the gentleman, as I instantly perceived, is that officer of the revenue who was supposed to have been killed lately off the French coast!"

The two men uttered ejaculations of satisfaction, and their leader hastened to add:

"He is proceeding along the rocks, evidently directing his steps to some particular locality. If he is alone, as it appears, we ought to be able to give a good account of him. Follow immediately behind me, and make as little noise as you can!"

Not another word was uttered for some minutes. Proceeding in the order indicated, the trio bent every faculty to the task of reaching our hero, without being seen by him. In this purpose they were successful, soon having him in full view immediately before them, as he passed on the brow of one of the lower cliffs of Spanish Head, but one that towered to a dizzy height above the sea, with a jagged face, here and there patched with stunted bushes and shrubs.

The shadows of night were now beginning to gather over the island, and the mist had become a positive drizzle. The wind having acquired considerable steadiness and force, the roar of the waves had also increased, and they now broke over the rocks beneath the cliffs of the Head with great violence.

Noel had merely halted a moment, scanning the sea, to observe if any of his vessels were within sight.

"He's alone," whispered the leader of the trio to his companion. "The roar of the waves will prevent him from hearing us. Let us rush forward and dispatch him!"

The two followers of the speaker were well armed with short swords, and at once prepared for the assault. At a given signal, taking advantage of the roar of the sea, they dashed rapidly to the spot where Captain Wynne was standing, all unconscious of his peril, with scuds of fog, from time to time, whirling and tossing around him.

As destiny would have it, however, one of the two followers of the mysterious stranger tripped upon some stones in his path and fell, being evidently less used to motion on land than he was to the movements of a vessel. He came down with a great crash, sprawling upon all-fours, while his sword flew clashing several yards before him. The consequence was that the young officer received a timely hint of what was in progress, and instantly placed himself on his guard against the assailants.

The battle that followed was terrific as it was short. Although greatly weakened by his recent wounds, Captain Wynne was able to oppose a resistance to his enemies that made their victory cost them dearly. One of them was killed outright, a second wounded, and the leader himself did not escape without some injuries. The odds, however, were too great for our hero in his weak state to long continue the struggle. Engaged in front and rear, a cowardly blow from behind laid him senseless at the feet of his foes, and they set up a shout of triumph.

"We have him," said the principal of the two victors. "How the sea roars, as if calling for him! Let it have him!"

Without another word or an instant's delay, he raised high aloft in his powerful hands the senseless body, and hurled it over the cliff.

A terrific crash followed far below, and then all was still, save the roar of the winds and waters.

"There he is," was the exclamation of the triumphant foe; "and not a minute too soon. Strange that he and Mona should have become acquainted! I must look after my interest in that quarter."

He gave some directions to his man, and then walked away towards Port St. Mary.

CHAPTER IV.

A TERRIBLE VISITATION.

His blood did freeze, his breath did burn,
'Twas feared his mind would ne'er return;
For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,
Like one of whom the story ran,
That spoke the spectre-hound in Man!

Lay of the Last Minstrel.

On Mona's return to the cabin she found that her father had come back, and was again seated on his door-step. The rays of a flickering candle, which stood upon a table within the main apartment of the dwelling, came through a window and fell upon his visage, showing that he was as moody as ever. The inhabitants of the village, with the exception of the father and daughter, were within doors, their usual avocations at that hour having been suspended on account of the weather.

"I haven't seen Brottie yet," observed the discontented fisherman, on seeing Mona; "but I shall do so early in the morning. You can sleep on't, if you like, and you and I'll have a settlement to-morrow."

Gladd at the thought of avoiding his further observation, Mona was about to enter the cabin, when, as the light fell full upon her countenance, his gaze also rested upon it. The change for the better that had so recently taken place therein proved a revelation to him. He sprang to his feet and caught her by the arm.

"You've seen him—you've seen him!" he exclaimed. "Brottie's a cheat! Your revenue friend is not dead!"

The maiden was at a loss what course to pursue in this emergency. She could not deny that she had seen Captain Wynne, and she did not dare reveal his presence in the island, lest the information should be used against him.

"Speak!" pursued Maxley, in a fury. "You need not deny it. I can read the whole story in your looks and actions. You've just seen him!"

Not perceiving any other course to take, Mona resolved to make one more effort to reconcile her father to the choice she had made. She accordingly said:

"Yes, father, I have seen him. He has explained why he did not come back sooner. He has told me more about himself. He has asked me to be his wife, and I have given him my promise. He is in comfortable circumstances, and will be good to you, making your future lot one of ease and honour. You shall have a home with us—"

Maxley uttered a sort of roar. He had listened, thus far, in speechless astonishment, but the idea of his living with an officer of law and order aroused him to action.

"This is unendurable," he ejaculated, shaking the maiden roughly. "If he's really what he pretends to be, do you suppose that I can enjoy myself with him? Or, if he's a penniless adventurer, as is likely, do I want you to marry him? In either or any case I'll have nothing to do with him. This business shall stop here. I'll shut you up and feed you on bread and water. I've parleyed with you too long, and will try what virtue there is in harshness!"

Without waiting for remonstrances, or heeding Mona's appeals, he dragged her into the cabin, opened an inner room, into which he thrust her with almost savage violence, and locked the door, leaving her in nearly total darkness.

"There! try that till morning!" he exclaimed, as he did so. "That will punish you and prevent you from warning that fellow of his danger!"

He smiled grimly at the security thus given him of holding Mona captive. He then put on a great coat, armed himself, and left the cabin, locking the door and leaving a candle burning.

"Back again?" he muttered, pausing on the door-step. "There must have been a mistake about his reported death. Brottie and the rest, however, will soon fix him. I must look for Brottie at once, and—"

His musings were interrupted by the sound of footsteps, and the next instant a man approached him, from the direction of Spanish Head, and came to a halt near him.

The new comer was the same mysterious stranger who had dealt so promptly with our hero.

"A gloomy night, neighbour," he remarked to the fisherman, bowing.

"Yes, drizzling enough," answered Maxley, rather shortly.

"I believe your name is Maxley?" pursued the stranger.

The fisherman bestowed a quick and half-startled glance upon the interlocutor, and otherwise betrayed that he was uneasy.

"Why—yes—my name is Maxley," he stammered, after a pause. "You have the advantage of me. Your—that is—"

"My name is Dean," said the stranger, in the same quiet and even tones he had before used. "I am the party who has taken recently the estate of Ballacreeby—"

"Oh—ah—just so," interrupted Maxley, with a sigh of relief. "I heard something said to-day of a rich gentleman from England coming to dwell among us. Glad to see you, sir. Walk in. I—"

"I would sooner see you here—for I believe your daughter is within," said the visitor, seating himself on a chopping-block a few yards from the door. "The fact is, Mr. Maxley, I have come to see you on private business!"

"Of course—just so," rejoined the fisherman, wonderingly, as he placed himself in front of the visitor. "My daughter has—that is retired, and we are quite by ourselves, sir!"

As he said this, he scanned the distinguished-looking stranger, who had placed himself where the light from the interior of the cabin fell upon him.

"Very good," was the response of the visitor, as he drew his elegant cloak around his form, and displayed his flashing jewels. "My business refers to your daughter. As you will readily comprehend, I could not have taken up my residence in this vicinity and have long remained ignorant of her charms and graces!"

"Of course not," replied Maxley, as his grim features partially relaxed.

"You will be able, then, from the homage rendered her by everybody, to understand my position. I have seen her, and accordingly I love her. Such being the fact, I have taken the liberty of placing myself in communication with you, with a view to an early union with her!"

The fisherman moved a little, to obtain a better view of the handsome but wicked-looking face of his visitor, and then asked:

"Has she seen you?"

"Not yet."

"Singular! In this case, your path is not very clear; so much depends upon what she may think of you after a meeting."

He again changed his position, and again scanned his visitor closely, from another point of view.

"Oh, all that can be managed," observed the stranger. "I shall depend a great deal upon your good offices in the matter!"

"Upon mine?" and there was a perceptible uneasiness in Maxley's voice and manner. "You have a singular way of wooing!"

He stooped beside the visitor, pretending to tie his shoe, and looked him sharply in the face, with an air

of blended apprehension and suspicion, and then added:

"In fact, it is my duty to tell you that my daughter will not heed my wishes in a matter of this kind, and I will even say frankly that it will be useless, in my opinion, for you to seek her acquaintance."

"Oh, not at all," responded the visitor, with a smile that disclosed an array of milk-white teeth, while he carelessly stroked his long and silky moustache. "The affair can be readily managed with your aid."

Maxley made a circuit of the visitor, regarding him with increased earnestness, and with an uneasiness that portended trepidation, and then he drew himself up with a reserved air, and responded:

"You force me to speak plainly. Permit me, therefore, to say that the hand of my daughter is already engaged, and that I must now and here decline your proposed attentions to her."

The smile of the wicked-looking visitor deepened at this assurance, and he rejoined:

"Stuff and nonsense, Nate Maxley! You will do as I wish. You will assist me in this matter!"

There was an air of authority in the stranger's voice and manner that temporarily abashed Maxley; but he soon flushed with indignation, and exclaimed:

"Enough, sir; whoever you are, you've mistaken your man."

The stranger uttered a careless little laugh.

"No, I am not at all mistaken," he said, fixing his piercing eyes upon his companion. "I shall woo your daughter, and you will devote yourself heart and soul to my cause. The fact is, I am in a position to command your friendly efforts."

The visage of Maxley became red and white by turns, and his whole soul and body appeared convulsed.

"Command!" he ejaculated, repeating the word the visitor had uttered with such singular emphasis.

"That's it—the precise word. To silence all opposition, permit me to say that I know you too well to be refused your assistance."

A pallor like that of death rested on Maxley's face as he listened to these words. His eyes rolled wildly from one distinguishing feature of the stranger's appearance to another, and his attempts at speech produced no articulate sounds. It was evident that he had formed a conception touching the visitor that was too terrible for expression, and that he had conceived a mortal dread of him.

"You jest," he finally gasped, as he fumbled in his pocket for his pistol. "I—I think you—you are my friend Brent, in disguise—my jolly friend Brent, endeavouring to scare me. But I don't like to see a joke carried too far, and I warn you that you are in peril!"

He drew his weapon, and cocked it, pointing it at the visitor's head, and continued:

"Now, Brent, old fellow, a joke's a joke, but you've gone far enough. Be off with you, or something may happen!"

The stranger again uttered his careless little laugh, and proceeded to deliberately examine the pistol pointed at him, looking into its muzzle, &c.

"That'll do," he finally said. "You know very well that I am not your friend Brent. You can put up your weapon. I have observed it sufficiently. It is the same one, I see, that you secured when officiating as a wrecker—the one you took from the man you buried in the sands!"

The effect of these words upon Maxley was withering. The pistol fell from his grasp, every particle of blood seemed to recede from his terror-stricken countenance, and his eyes seemed bursting from their sockets. In fact, he would have fallen to the ground, had the visitor not extended a hand to his support.

"You see that I am familiar with your merits," pursued the stranger, with a blandness of manner that was almost feminine, "and will also perceive why I rely upon your services. Need I speak further of that unfortunate you buried in the sands?"

"Oh, spare me!" gasped Maxley, cowering to the ground. "Oh, horror! horror!"

A creaking sound fell upon the hearing of the visitor at this juncture, and he looked around to ascertain its cause. It was originated by Mona, who, finding her prison rather close and uncomfortable, and hearing voices outside of the cabin, had taken the liberty of opening one of the small two-pane windows in the room. This window was beside the door-step, and looked directly upon the spot where the two men were standing; but it was in total darkness, so that Mona was not observed, and she accordingly witnessed all that followed, and heard every word that was uttered.

Her first proceeding, of course, was to note the appearance of the stranger, who was still revealed with considerable distinctness by the candle in the kitchen.

"Rise, my friend," said the stranger. "You need have no fear of the betrayal of your secrets. It is clear that I can depend upon your valuable services, and that you can rely on my silence."

"But how," gasped Maxley, "did you learn that I—that is, the secret?"

"That you shall know at the proper time," was the reply. "Suffice it to say that I have trusty friends in Man who have long had you under their special observation!"

"Me?" faltered the fisherman, astonished.

The stranger bowed.

"And why me?"

"Simply because you are the father of the young lady I propose to marry," was the response. "I have taken measures to obtain the information I am now using to control you, and I have, of course, secured this information for this very purpose!"

"Your end, then—your marriage with Mona has been deemed an important one to merit all this trouble?"

"The most important end of my whole existence. In fact, there is nothing on the earth that I would exchange for my prospect of becoming the husband of your daughter!"

"You have been pursuing this business, then, for some months?" said Maxley.

The stranger again bowed.

"You must be singularly fascinated by her?"

"Again you are right. I have had some knowledge of her for years, and am also somewhat familiar with her mother's history and with your's. I know why you left England, what charges still hang over you, what course to take—to command your services!"

Again Maxley gasped for breath.

"In fact, Mona has long been the great object of my thoughts," pursued the stranger; "but it was not till last summer that I formed an adequate realization of her. Since then I have had her under my eyes several times, and need I say that each glimpse I have had of her has added to the love I bear her? To-day, as I watched her awhile unnoticed, at only a short distance from her, I thought that I should go wild with my emotions. Such eyes as she possesses—such a form—such lips—such a blending of womanly and girlish graces!"

Bad as he was, Maxley groaned at the lawless fervour with which these words were uttered. He had managed to recover a portion of his habitual self-possession, but there was an abject awe in his demeanour towards his visitor as he ventured to say:

"But I am afraid that Mona will not be willing to receive your addresses."

"That, as I have indicated," rejoined the stranger, "is a difficulty to be met and conquered, not shunned. The first point to be settled is, that you will aid me in any and every way I shall, from time to time, require of you."

"Yes, yes, I will aid you!"

"Swear by your soul, by the hereafter, by everything you hold sacred, that Mona shall be my wife, and that you will aid and prosper my wooing!"

A cold sweat broke out over Maxley's face, and for a moment he was speechless—utterly choked by his terrible emotions. A significant hint, however, that compliance was the sole price of the terrible visitor's silence, caused him to respond:

"I swear!"

"That's all the difficulty," said the stranger, carelessly. "The rest is simple. You can say to your daughter, in the morning, that Mr. Dean—"

"Dean!" gasped Maxley, in a sort of wondering horror.

"Yes, Dean," answered the stranger, with his invariable calmness. "You will say to her that Mr. Dean, who has just come here from England to reside, has seen her and expressed a desire to make her acquaintance. If she objects, you will insist. Within a day she will receive me as a visitor. Within five days, she must accept me as a suitor; and in two weeks we must be married!"

Maxley gasped for breath, and looked as if he could have prayed for rocks and mountains to fall upon him.

"In the meantime," added the visitor, "I may as well say that I shall keep sharp eyes upon you, and that I hold you responsible for her early introduction to me, and for her safe-keeping. Let her take to flight, let anything whatever occur to deprive me of her society, and of a continual knowledge of her whereabouts, and in that same hour I will bring you to justice. Remember! To-morrow forenoon you will prepare the way, and at three o'clock in the afternoon I will be here to see her. Until then, adieu!"

With this the mysterious suitor turned on his heels and walked quietly away, soon disappearing in the darkness, and leaving Maxley in a stupor of terror and despair.

(To be continued.)

OSTRICH FARMING.—By late news from the Cape of Good Hope, we learn that the farmers of that colony are beginning to find it profitable to keep flocks of ostriches, for the feathers of these birds are worth £25

sterling the pound. For thirty-five ostriches there must be three hundred acres of grazing ground. The plucking takes place once in six months; the yield of feathers from each bird being worth from £10 to £12 10s. The original cost of the young ostriches is said to be £5 each. Some of the farmers who have tried the experiment are of opinion that ostrich feathers will pay better than any other produce of the colony.

CAPTAIN BRUXEL, a French officer, has returned to France after being detained a captive for thirty-three years among the Arabs of Algeria.

SIR RALPH ROTHERMEL'S CHOICE.

CHAPTER I.

THE scene opens in a dim chamber, fitted with Gothic panels and heavy oaken furniture. It was midnight, and great masses of sombre colour fell athwart the vast apartment, in the far recess of which stood a white, canopied bed.

Midway gleamed out, cold and frost-like, the rare lace draperies that fell before a shrine of the Virgin. One lamp swung in silver chains over a bracket of lustrous marble, on which a prayer-book, bound in solid gold, as it seemed, laid open at the penitential psalms.

But the strangest sight of all was that of a woman of slight figure, clad in white, her bare feet glistening among the crimson and other rich hues of the costly carpet—her hands locked as if in anguish—her features set to the expression of absolute despair. The long masses of her hair, which, when coiled about her head, seemed too heavy for endurance, had been thrown down, and, in the beauty of their exuberant tresses, glistened and coiled with a snake motion over the white garments.

On the high mantel-piece a fantastic little clock had just chimed out the strokes of twelve; and, as if some weight had been removed by the silvery tones breaking the monotonous midnight silence, the woman looked up, her eyes glistening and wild, as she cried, in the lowest and clearest tones:

"Great heaven! it was so nearly done! and now all is over."

Her head dropped on her bosom, her hands came together in a rigid clasp. All the motions of weary pain was here; the knit brow, the lifeless eyes staring at vacancy, the writhing of the shoulders, the set teeth—all betrayed an overwhelming and bitter misery, complete and unbearable.

"I might have won him," she wailed—"I might have been his wife, but for this silly, simpering child, with her doll-like features. What—oh, heaven! what does he see in her to love? What will the affection of such a woman be to mine? I have loved him for fifteen weary years, content to sit at his side, to be his shadow, if only he would live on as he had lived. And for the last few months I saw that his manner had changed—that he betrayed some consciousness of my presence—that his eye brightened when I drew near. I thought that my long dream was at last to be fulfilled—that the spirit of my dead sister, who alone, besides God, knows of my true affection for the man she loved so devotedly, had, silent and unseen, laboured on my behalf, and the consummation was near; when comes this scheming marplot to drive, with her brilliancy and her fresh youth, all thoughts of me, the true, the devoted, from his mind. Oh, why should I be punished so severely? They will tear my heart in shreds—they will take away Blanche, my blessed child Blanche!"

And a wild, low cry of bitter anguish escaped her lips.

"Did you call me, aunty?" cried a sweet, soft voice, issuing from the far, curtained recess—a voice at which the woman started, almost guiltily, then caught up the thick tresses, and wound them with a fierce motion around her head.

"No, Blanche—no, dearest!" she cried, in a voice greatly changed, though her features were still distorted.

"Is it not quite late, aunty?" continued the same voice.

"Fast twelve, my dear."

"I was dreaming—was it not very strange, aunty?—of my mother."

The girl, a beautiful creature, had lifted herself in the bed, and now, leaning forward, her round, white arm sinking into the pillow, she regarded the figure coming toward her.

"Yes," she continued, "it was the same face that papa has in his bedroom, only there was a lustre about it that was not of earth. I don't wonder papa never married again. How could he, after loving a woman like that, aunty? Are you not well?"

"No, my dear, not very well. I am nervous, I believe, and cannot sleep."

"And I am as wide awake as if it were morning! If you will lie down and let me stroke your head, or pat you on the shoulder, I think you will fall asleep."

"Perhaps, dearest; in a moment!"

And the woman paused, fastening her luminous dark eyes upon the lovely face looking out from a silken net, under which her curls were confined. Then she slid softly down upon the floor, and wound her arms about her niece.

"And what do you think of the pretty child who calls your father uncle?" she asked, holding in her voice, catching her breath.

"But he is not her uncle—no, indeed!" cried Blanche, almost indignantly.

"No, only an adopted child, whom your father's sister took, when she was a little child. But she is very lovely—very! You think so, do you not, Blanche?"

"Yes," replied the young girl, with her usual candour; and, then, after a moment, added, "but I don't like her—I don't like her at all."

"And pray, my child, why?" asked the other, with a trembling voice.

"I don't know. I'm not happy—not even easy—in her presence. There's something—I don't know what it is—an impression that she is not quite true. She makes me cold when I go near her."

"That is very strange, my darling, when your papa seems so fond of her."

"Fond of her! Oh, no, you are mistaken. She amuses him; for you know she can be very witty and very pleasing, but that is all. Papa! why, he is forty, and she scarcely seventeen! Don't look so—I won't believe it, though I see it in your eyes. No—not aunt Mary, it is you he loves—I have seen it so long. Oh, if he would but give you to me for a mother—if he would!"

Closer and more passionate grew the clasp around the young girl's form, while a shiver ran through the veins of the prostrate woman before her.

"No, my darling, I am nothing to him—less now than ever; for I tell you truly she is winding her silken web around him, fibre by fibre, and every day he is becoming estranged from us."

"From us—true: it would be from both if that hideous event were to take place. Oh, aunt Mary, he must not—he must not! Why, I could not call her mother—I could not love and respect her as I do you. She is so frivolous, so utterly unwomanly, so incompetent for such a position. Aunt, what shall we do to save him—what shall we do?"

"Alas, my child! how can I answer that question?"

"But, aunt, you would not think it a suitable match?"

The woman whose face had been partly hidden, looked up, and, in spite of the dim light and the dark shadows, Blanche saw in that face, in those eyes of despair, a confirmation of what she had both hoped and feared.

She could say nothing, for she knew what the love of such a heart must be—the love that had cherished her with so much tenderness, such true affection for the many years that had intervened since her childhood. Her bright face drooped over the bowed-head as she threw her arms round the neck of her more than mother.

CHAPTER II.

Yes, Sir Ralph Rothermel was forty, and unmarried. At the age of twenty-four he had lost a wife, a creature of so many perfections that she was mourned by high and low, rich and poor; and it was thought that the baronet would never recover from the shock of a calamity so great. Indeed, for five years he mourned constantly. At the end of that time he began to enter society, but the places in which he formerly delighted had lost their charm, and after a few trials he found more pleasure at home in the society of his little daughter and the circle which, since his wife's death, he had not allowed to be disturbed.

His wife had been very charming; her cousin—whom Blanche affectionately termed aunt—three years her junior, was not equally so. She lacked the vivacity and sprightliness of feature and expression that had made Lady Maude so attractive.

Mary Chillingworth was yet a youthful woman in appearance. Maude had been only twenty at the time of her death. Mary was now but little over thirty, and still single. Nobody dreamed, still less the handsome, sombre widower, that her heart had long been bis—that she loved him when comparatively a child. She had been bridesmaid at her cousin's wedding, and though hopeless of winning his regards, she still lived at the old house, happy in the love of his child, who was her principal charge—happy in his society, whilst she sat quietly netting; his aged mother on the other side of the fire, stately, but in spite of her notions of etiquette, often inclined to nod in a feeble manner at the winking, blinking flame before her.

Still, after a time, he began to feel a want if she was not present, then to ask her opinion or advice, then to offer little gifts, and it may be only in the spirit of a brother; but all these indications lit the dark eye of his dead wife's cousin with the fire of hope, and painted its brilliant hues on her cheek.

Suddenly the old place was thronged with company. Lady Standish, his sister, gay and dashing, though a widow, brought her three sons, the eldest in orders, and her adopted daughter, to the grim old arches of Westerlin, as the family mansion of the Rothermels was called.

Lady Frances Standish was a brilliant woman, and she was fast educating her adopted child to outshine her in those dashing qualities upon which she had prided herself. Nelly Standish was scarcely yet sixteen, and a finished coquette by nature. There was not much of her after her charms had been enumerated.

Of the three boys, one was a brilliant Magist, and had a fortune. He was the son of Henry Standish, a very rich commoner, who was a widower when he married the reigning belle, Lady Frances Rothermel. The other two were born after this marriage.

Passionate and wayward, yet abounding in the noblest qualities, Charles Henry Standish had the ill-fortune to fall deeply in love with the bright, heartless Nelly, and he felt for her an affection such as it is not often the lot of woman to inspire. Nelly, however, was fishing for a live lord, a baronet, or perhaps even a higher degree of nobility, and though she loved young Standish as much as her vain nature was capable of loving, yet she would have eaten her own heart for the distinctions and honours that might accrue in case of a splendid alliance. Had not Lady Frances married beneath her for love? and might not she who knew no lineage, and had never seen the mother who bore her, inspire a passion in the breast of some noble, well-dowered man? She had heard of Sir Ralph Rothermel, his beauty, his great grief, which nothing would assuage; and immediately on the return of Lady Frances, who had been sojourning on the continent, had prevailed on her to visit Westerlin. So it happened that this sparkling vision entered, brightening the sombre portals of the old place; bewitching all who saw her—for she had a weird spell—all but the quiet, staid Lady Mary, and the pure, innocent Blanche, who felt an instinctive repugnance to this gay creature.

"And how is it you can bear so much gloom?" she asked, gaily, one day of Blanche, with whom she had been over the great house. "Why don't you have these stately old things taken down, and bright, pleasant furniture instead? I'd have all the windows out if I reigned here, and nice new French glass put in, with the sashes opening outward upon the balconies. Why don't you do it?"

"The very thought is sacrilege," said Blanche, opening her eyes very wide. "I love the old house as it is, as it was when mamma lived. I wouldn't have it look new for the world."

"Indeed, then, and I would. I'd cut down those trees out yonder, too, so as to have a glimpse of the river; and—why, you are absolutely turning pale."

"The trees!" half-gasped Blanche. "Why, do you know it took them two hundred years to grow, and that they were planted there by our ancestors? My father would as soon think of transplanting the graves of the dead as those trees."

"There, now, you needn't look and speak that way! one volcano is enough, and that is not your character, as it is mine. I'm sure what you can see in all this gloomy grandeur I can't even imagine. People as young as you are, seldom have such tastes."

"Mine have not been spoiled," said Blanche, quietly.

"And mine have, I suppose you would say!" cried Nelly, looking at her with a laugh and face so radiant that Blanche, who did not see her father coming, thought that with all her art, a handsomer creature was never seen.

"Aunt Mary is waiting for me," said Blanche, pausing at the door.

"Give her my love, and tell her I have a kindly feeling for aunts of every description," said Nelly, and then went quietly forward.

"Oh, Sir Ralph, pardon me! I should not have laughed so loudly; I was not aware you were near," she said, with a demure little courtesy, a white outstretched hand, and falling glance.

"My dear, voices like yours never disturb me," said the latter, a smile on his matchless lips. "Well, how do you like the old place?"

"Charming, everywhere charming!" was the reply, in a voice of subdued enthusiasm. "I am such a lover of the antique, you must know; everything fits the time and place so well. I have been going into ecstasies all the morning over the beautiful old furniture, so solid, so impishable it looks. It is so different from our house, everything new and glaring."

"Then you like it? I am very glad; I feared,

after your long sojourn abroad, that everything would seem faded and moth-eaten. I confess that I have prejudices against the modern style, though those who set up new houses must, of course, set up new furniture. It would be hard to procure carving like that, brightened by the polish of a hundred and forty years." And he pointed to a massive chair that stood in an ante-room near by.

"Dear me, yes, indeed," and the sprite threw herself gracefully in the chair; her yellow curls clinging to the intricate notching, and tracing all over its hard, stern back. Sir Ralph looked down upon her, smiling. He thought that for years nothing had refreshed his sight like that fair young face.

Farther off, in one of the angles of the wide hall, glared a pair of fierce, dark eyes; and in the shadow, hands and teeth were locked and veins throbbing feverishly.

"There is only one thing to make your home complete," said Nelly, looking up, innocently. He started; on his pale cheek there flitted a faint glow which passed, as the artful girl continued; "that is, a haunted room! Oh, if there were only a little place, with a dear, delightful ghost coming and going, and nobody able to sleep or rest there! I wonder you haven't a haunted room in your great, grand, mansion!"

"There is," said Sir Ralph, gallantly; "but, fortunately, it happens to be haunted with youth, and beauty, and smiles and pleasant dreams. Oh, yes, my mansion has its haunted room at present."

She blushed at the outspoken compliment, which she could not pretend to misunderstand; and the dark form down in the shadow shook a clenched fist, and drew in its angry lips again.

"I regret to leave you alone," said Sir Ralph, gallantly; "but Blanche will soon be through her hour with her aunt. Will my niece amuse herself till then?"

CHAPTER III.

SHE sat there, quite still, only looking after him with dancing eyes.

"Niece!" she laughed, almost mockingly; "I don't believe he likes to say it—"

"He had rather say wife, perhaps, you think," said a low, mocking man's voice close beside her.

All the blood leaped into her face as she started from her seat, her heart beating, and looked round half-angrily.

"Oh, you have been playing the listener, as usual!" she added the two last words with haughty precision. "Well, suppose he should want me for his wife, what then?"

"Only that one of us two would be missing at the bridal feast!" he said, with deadly intoning. "I have to remind you that you are already promised—"

"Only upon conditions," interrupted the girl, throwing back her head defiantly.

"Upon conditions that will insure your hand if they are honourably regarded. Oh, Nelly, why will you flirt, when you know it gives me such intolerable pain? Nelly, Nelly, my darling, if you knew how you tread on my heart!" he cried, in a voice of anguish.

"You are always complaining," she said, her lip pouting a little.

"Because you give me reason; indeed you do, Nelly. You know how true I am to you—that I would rather die than be false to you in one iota of fidelity. You know that, Nelly."

"Oh, I know you are very good, very kind, and, of course, I remember what has passed, and all that; but you mustn't bind me down too strictly, Charlie. Let me be a little gay with my poor uncle, who wouldn't see a humming-bird if it lit under his nose. The poor, gloomy creature! I'm sure, if anybody needs sunshine, it is him."

"Only don't flirt with him," said the other gravely.

"I know, of course, that you mean no harm: that you will be honourable; but I fear that Sir Ralph Rothermel is engaged to the sister of his first wife, who has been like a mother to his only child! and if you throw yourself in his way—"

"Why, bless her poor old face! you are afraid it will be all over with her, I suppose."

"She has a very sweet face; patient and intellectual, and I think she has been devoted to him for years. It would be very hard—"

"If I sailed in and took all her honours. Bless you, my dear, it is not at all likely that he thinks of me. If he did, I'm not sure but your sage advice would go for nothing. Only think! to be a Lady Rothermel! It almost takes away my breath."

"Pshaw!" he cried, angrily; "what trifles women build on! What happier would you be, tied for all existence to a man sixteen or twenty years your senior, cherishing a phantom, as he will all his life, for I know the kind of morbid nature he possesses! He

cannot give you the wealth I can, and as for a title, why I'll try to win one if that would content you."

"But this is hundreds of years old," persisted Nelly. "Yes, and moss-grown, like the names on an ancient tomb-stone. Oh, Nelly, be serious for once! tell me you do not love this stately marble effigy, this man whose heart is dead!"

"Oh, Charlie, when you come to talk of love, that's another matter!" and her eyes flashed once in his, then fell, covered by their veiling lids; the long brown lashes coquetting with the scarlet of her cheek. A most consummate actress was she; deeper than even the fathomless ocean.

"You always disarm me, Nelly," he said, tenderly, and raised the fairy-like hand to kiss it; while she, watching with smiles on her dewy lips, looked so arch and so tempting! Presently her name sounded—"Coming, mother!" she cried, and with another pretty smile in his face she tripped away, and soon vanished.

"How often I am mistaken in her!" sighed the young man; "and what must she think of my capricious temper? I am ashamed of myself, that I could doubt her, and yet, when I see her with others—can it be that a title would have that temptation?" he muttered, pausing darkly again. "Out upon this suspicion; I must conquer it if I ever expect to be happy, or make others so. Perhaps I love her only too well."

Sir Ralph was at that moment speculating in his room.

"She's a merry, bright little creature, too, and so full of gay fancies. My heart has not been so much interested for years, I confess. I was getting to like poor Mary, but beside this brilliant creature she is so dull! True, she is the sister of my lost love, the friend and guide of my pretty Blanche, and I am afraid she likes me. Pah! what absurd fancies haunt my silly old brain. Old! good heavens, to call myself old, and not a silver thread in my hair! What is forty—fifty, even, if a man has not outlived his youth! But the creature, the sprite, the fairy, is only sixteen; just as old as Blanche, and she to call her mother! How absurd! And yet that face follows me. She must have some superior power of attraction—the elf! How pretty she looked just now; the upturned face, the golden, glistening hair; nay, more, how beautiful! And the face—where have I seen its counterpart? Really, I forget, and still it wanders in my memory like the shape of a spirit that forms itself and floats away at will. I wonder what my little Blanche thinks of her."

"Papa, may I come in?" There was a moment's hesitancy, a rattling of papers, and just as the voice was about to be raised again, he said:

"Certainly, my darling." "I came to you with my last year's work, which you know you put away in a hiding-place of your own. Dear papa, you must be well and happy; I haven't seen you look so bright for days and weeks."

"As well as usual; and as for happier, a man with such a treasure as this could scarcely be otherwise than happy," and he drew her towards him with a kiss. Then he asked carelessly:

"My dear, where have you left your cousin?"

"My cousin! Oh, you mean Nelly Standish?"

"So you ignore the relationship?"

"She is not a cousin, dear father," said Blanche, her cheeks tinged with crimson.

"Pride, eh! the little *protégée* is nameless, and my child happens to inherit—"

"Oh, papa! pray don't think it's pride—indeed it is not that," interrupted Blanche.

"Then what? For I plainly see my little girl don't like her."

"I—well, papa—I—do not admire Miss Nelly, I confess. Only think," she added, indignantly, "of her wondering that we did not cut down the grand old oaks, that the view of the river might not be broken."

"Oh, that was mere childishness."

"But, papa, she was very much in earnest, indeed. She would cut them down to-morrow if she had the power. I don't like her. She is awful. She don't seem young, only in years and appearance."

"My child, have you been counselled to this?" asked Sir Ralph, stopping short in his walk, and looking away.

She stood speechless, indignant.

"Has your aunt any hand in it? Do you and she—"

"Father!"

The voice rang out so firm, so grand, that it compelled him to face her. There was a sort of shuddering horror in her eyes, a mute reproach in every feature.

"My pure, sweet, unselfish aunt Mary. The sister of my angel mother! She counsel—she plot, in a matter like this? Father, forgive me if I am wanting in respect; but I cannot imagine how it was ever possible for such a thought to gain entrance to your mind."

Sir Ralph did look and feel heartily ashamed for a moment. Then he reddened as he turned to pace the length of his study again; he had curiously compromised himself before his child.

"Shall I retire, father?" she asked, in a sad, serious voice.

The impulse was upon him to clasp her to his heart—to reassure her with words that, once passed, it would have stained a Rothermel's honour to break; to send some kind message to Lady Mary that would make her heart leap, for he felt that he had neglected her cruelly of late, even forbearing those little attentions that she had a right to expect.

But he conquered the feeling, and with merely a stately bow between them, father and daughter parted as they had never parted before.

When her aunt sought her, she found her lying prone, trembling and exhausted with the passion of grief she had endured.

"Oh, aunt Mary!" she cried, in a voice of anguish, "why did ever that wicked girl come here? I do believe she had designs on my father from the first."

"Be charitable, my dear," said the other, softly.

"No, aunt, I can't be charitable—I don't want to be—I won't!" she cried, passionately. "My father never, never shall marry that painted doll baby! If I have been a child hitherto, I'll be a woman now. She shall see that I have will and decision. I'll go to aunt Frances about it. I don't believe she thinks of the matter at all. Oh, aunt Mary! how shall we save him?"

Aunt Mary sat motionless and pale. She spoke not—suggested nothing.

CHAPTER IV.

"DEAR Charlie, now you are going—"

She clung to him with fondness artfully simulated.

"Now I am going, you are very sorry that ever you teased me?"

"Oh, yes, very; but you'll be back in a week?"

"Depends upon circumstances," was the answer, with a grim smile. "If aunt Skelton should die within that time, I shall be here with a legacy in my pocket; but old people in her station hang on to life. Well, I don't particularly want her to die; she was always very kind to me—and so, you see, I may stay a week—I may stay a month; but, Nelly, promise me you won't marry Sir Ralph," he added, laughing, "because, my darling, you know nobody can love you half as well as I."

"Indeed, then, I shall give no promise—no, not even to make you happy, you foolish fellow! But don't stay long."

She stood there laughing with her bright eyes, and a little musical gurgle away down her throat, unconscious that Sir Ralph sat in a balcony quite near, so near that he could not stir for fear of being heard, and only concealed by a luxuriant grape-vine that ran nearly to the roof of the house.

"Poor fellow! What a pity he likes me so well!" she said, in a soft, sighing tone. "It was very kind in him to ask me not to marry the baronet, the dear, the fascinating baronet, in spite of his forty years. But I'll take no advantage of his kindness; it would be a pity—"

What would be a pity, never came to light, for at that moment a footstep startled her, and she was summoned to the presence of Lady Frances Standish.

"My dear," said that lady, looking quite surprised,

"I have had an offer for you."

"An offer for me, madam?"

"Yes. You remember that gawky Frenchman?"

"With the yellow eyes? Oh, dear, yes."

"He turns out to be a marquis of the *ancien régime*, and has just come into possession of a great fortune."

"Well, madam?"

"He wants you to be his wife."

"Say no, madam," was the demure answer. "He is too yellow and too long for me."

"Nelly, do you intend to marry Charlie?"

Nelly opened her eyes. She blushed a little.

"Why—I—of course I can't tell."

"Do you love him?"

"Why, madam, what questions!"

"This is evasion. I want you to be candid with me. I was asked to question you by some one who thinks very highly of you."

That unlucky addition put the veto on Nelly's conscientious scruples.

"Of course I don't love him, particularly," she said, with charming simplicity. "You know I have always been brought up with him, and—he is very kind; but—love him—no."

Sir Ralph Rothermel met her in the hall. She had blushed through shame. Her eyes sparkled indignantly at her own unworthiness; and, hypocrite though she was, she certainly looked very charming. If the baronet had before lost his heart, he had surely by this time lost his senses.

Nelly was passing him with a graceful bow; but he held out his hand and beckoned her. She came as obediently as Blanche might have come.

"Child, was it your lover you parted from?"

She looked up, blushing still more deeply.

"Oh, no. Why should you imagine it?"

"I did not know—I—I thought—" he said, hesitating. "Nelly, will you take an old man for a lover?"

"I do not understand you," and she gave one of her bewitching glances, that said as plainly as looks could speak, "of course I know what you mean."

"Nelly, will you be my wife?"

There, the Rubicon was passed. The wilful child, with a rich colour glowing on either cheek, had only breath enough to say:

"Yes, if you will take me," and then ran, with his kiss burning upon her forehead, to her own room.

And was the baronet happy? He thought he was for the first few blissful moments; but there fell upon his spirit a pall so black that it seemed to darken him, soul and body. What had he done? To whom had he given the place of his dear and spotless wife?—to whom the guardianship of his beautiful, innocent daughter?

Thought oppressed him. He went to his own room, and locked his door. Sitting down at his table, he fell into a reverie, in which the image of his wife, her sister, and Nelly, alternately chased each other from the canvas of his memory.

The sum of his meditations was that he loved the sprightly, pretty elf whom he had really asked to be his wife, and he should wed her in spite of all opposition.

"Blanche may stay still with her aunt Mary," he murmured, when, raising his eyes, a vision, for which he was totally unprepared, met his gaze.

There, in the distance, seeming to melt into the wall, though she stood a few feet this side, apparently projected from it, was his dead wife, in the long robes in which she had been laid in her coffin—the eyes lustreless and fixed, a mournful look of reproach on lips and brow, as she slowly shook her head as if in token of disapprobation.

The count attempted to rise—he was powerless. The flesh quivered on his bones, the blood curdled in his veins, his hair rose with horror. He sat there like a thing of stone, and watched it, till, seeming to vanish in thin mist, it disappeared.

"I would not—I would not! but my word is given!" groaned the unhappy man.

CHAPTER V.

"SIR RALPH don't look like the same man."

"No, and what is he hurrying preparations for? He is here, and there, and everywhere, and means to be married this week."

So the servants talked.

Blanche and her aunt were always together. Blanche had not spoken to Nelly since the news was broken to her.

"I cannot and will not be present at the wedding, and I told papa so. Poor papa! he seems like a man under a strange hallucination. He looks as if he was dreaming. Has she bewitched him, do you think? At all events, I shall not be separated from you, darling."

"That is pleasant, my dear," replied her aunt, with a far-away look.

"Yes. But, oh, you are suffering!" and Blanche burst into tears.

She felt for a long time the soft pressure of the dear hand upon her head; and, from sobbing on her aunt's knee, she fell asleep.

It was nearly evening when she woke up. The light had been brought in, so had the supper; but her aunt would not disturb her. Now she looked around, joyfully.

"Oh, I have had such a sweet, tender dream!" she said.

"I am glad, my darling. Now let me make the tea; and do you uncover the toast and eat. You have tasted scarcely a mouthful to-day."

"But I think I have an appetite now." She sat opposite the urn, a soft pink flush on her cheeks. "And I must tell you my dream. Well, then, I thought papa was taking her to the altar. Between them both and you and I, there seemed a dark, heavy cloud. And while I was looking, there descended from the ceiling of the church a white, bright light, not unlike the shining of fire upon silver. As it came down, gently, parting the atmosphere, it wrapped you as in a lustrous robe. I never saw anything so beautiful, so heavenly! Then, after you seemed dressed in it, robed by invisible hands of angels, you walked straight through the dense clouds, and touched my father on the shoulder. He shuddered for a moment, looking on his bride, who was very pale; but when he turned his countenance changed. She melted away from him, and he smiled, holding out his arms, while

you fell in them, and he kissed you on the forehead." The pale woman almost gasped at the conclusion. She shivered with delight. For one fervent embrace like that, she would have given her life.

"But, my darling, you forget they will be married to-morrow."

"Yes, but in the chapel something will stop them. Oh, aunt, I believe it—I believe it!" and, though very quiet the rest of the evening, she was happy.

Meantime Lady Frances was angry with herself for coming to Westerlin, angry with her brother, and, indeed, with all the world. She never dreamed of this issue, never dreamed that she should be the means of bringing alienation to a household that had never known so much as a little cloud upon its horizon. Remembrance had no effect upon the count. The word of a Rothermel was never taken back, he said. Nelly endured dark looks on every side; the domestics hated her, Lady Frances treated her with coolness, and should Charlie come at the crisis, something terrible was sure to follow. But she held that little head proudly up—she never flinched.

"Wait till I am mistress," was all she said to herself, reining in her will now with cords of iron. Apparently she was very demure, very meek; inwardly, she was a raging little tigress, longing to show her teeth and claws. She had hastened the wedding, for she wanted it all over before Charlie made his appearance.

Her foster-mother helped attire her, very unwillingly, groaning as she placed the family jewels upon this obscure paragon, and saw how the blaze of the eyes met the blaze of diamonds, and both shone the brighter. It was nearly time. The baronet sat in the reception-room, trying to persuade himself that he was really happy; Blanche and her aunt were together, neatly attired; the former had declined the honour of being bridesmaid, the latter caught the eye of the expectant bridegroom once.

He turned again, but only the clear, pale profile of Mary Chillingworth—so like that of his Maude—was all that was visible in that dim light. His heart leaped with an emotion new as strange; had he, after all, been deceiving himself?

A childish voice roused him.

Nelly floated down the room, shining in lace and jewels. She was radiant, but the baronet could not exult in her beauty as he had hitherto done. He strove to recall his enthusiasm; it was utterly beyond his power. His heart sank within him. Again he saw that strange familiar likeness—to whom?

He could think of but one person in the world he had ever hated; and, shuddering, he traced his features in her face.

The bridal bells had begun to ring, when the servants saw an oddish figure hurrying up the main entrance where already the peasantry were beginning to assemble. It hurried up the massive steps, and thrust itself with its scarlet cloak under the very eyes of the supercilious footman, who started back as if his splendour was contaminated by her presence.

"Quick, I must see the Lady Frances Standish," said that breathless individual.

"You can't; move off from here!" but before the astonished footman could grasp her by the arm, she had glided past him, up the grand staircase, on to the rooms where the guests with the bridal party were all ready to go into the chapel.

"On life and death, as it were, I must speak to Lady Frances!" cried the strange apparition, making its appearance at the most inauspicious moment.

"Lady," she continued, singling out the baronet's sister, "perhaps you remember me as living at Burden's Lodge, and very much broken in health at the time?" Here she stopped, with a quick courtesy and a sharp little nod.

"You are interrupting us very much," said Sir Ralph, in a tone of displeasure.

"And your lucky stars you'll bless, your lordship, to the end of your days, that disturbed you was at this solemn moment, and the priest not standing before you, a sayin' words that you'll need to repent of if you promised them—no disrespect to this fair lady as is agoin' to be your bride, soppusin' from the fine ornaments and things, which is her father's face, remarkable, and a handsome man he was, only a discreditable business, and never could be a gentleman—la! what am I sayin'?" and she dropped another short courtesy.

"Come with me into another room," said Lady Frances, her face ablaze.

"Lad, marm, I didn't think to put you into such a comberation—only to see you quiet like, and tell you what I know and can swear to, which Miss Scudder—that I should be deceived in—told me on her dying bed as took place a month come Michaelmas—and she to carry a smooth face over it all, which was a paltry hundred, kept her secret. Ah! the wickedness of this world."

"Woman, will you tell your story?" cried Lady Frances, angrily. Don't you know they are all waiting?"

"Which wedding there never will take place when I get my breath, and if your ladyship won't speak that sharp, because I do it all for the best."

"I'll be quite silent if you'll only come to the story, or whatever you have to tell me. It's concerning the young lady whom Sir Ralph is to marry."

"Which is his own blood relation!" said the woman, solemnly.

"Great heaven!" cried Lady Frances, quite startled.

"Now, don't go to fainting, my lady—leastwise, till I've told," said the woman, with the same stolid composure. "It's been hushed up, you know, how the baronet's silly sister ran away, sixteen years ago, with the groom, which a handsomer man I never set eyes on, but which, leastwise, was a brute, and left the poor lady."

"Well, well!" cried Lady Frances, horrified. "She died—the child died."

"She died, but not the child, please your ladyship, which Jane Scudder put her own dead infant in the arms of the misfortunate creature as was sleeping the sleep of death at her house. She told me all as she was dying, and a horrible dying it was, which, said she, 'I wouldn't a done—only my heart ached for a live child, my own dying in three weeks, and nobody knowing except the doctor, and he saying that her child never could live, and I a-wantin' it to have a mother, poor thing, as its father was away, nobody knew where, and so, after the funeral, why, John were taken sick, and died, and I poor enough with three children, so I give it into good hands of her own relations, which sorry am I now that I didn't tell the truth, though, maybe not good for the child.' And there you have it now. Sir Ralph Rothermel wouldn't marry his own niece—and such a father, poor child!"

"How shall I tell him?" gasped Lady Frances. "Go down into the servants' hall," she said to the woman, and then sent for her brother.

Poor little Nelly, when she heard it, went on like a mad creature.

"It was a wicked fabrication, got up to ruin her," and she fell into terrible fainting fits; while Charlie, who had come post-haste to Westerlin, hot and angry, raved below, and the whole house was in confusion.

As for the bridegroom, he breathed freely once more. The family disgrace had been hushed up for years. At the time it happened it had nearly killed the proud Sir Ralph Rothermel; but as mother and child, as he thought, were both dead, the mother was never reverted to.

Blanche's prediction came to pass. The cloud had come, but the silver light of true affection had pierced its darkness.

Young Standish was willing to take the poor, unhappy Nelly, who had loved him as well as she could love with her selfish nature, and who, thoroughly humbled, became a much more worthy woman.

Sir Ralph Rothermel was married, not quite a year afterwards, to the Lady Mary, cousin of his former wife, and there were great rejoicings. He never knew that Blanche, driven to desperation, had personated the ghost in the dim chamber where first his resolution and his passion were shaken.

M. A. D.

ALL ALONE.

By E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,

Author of "The Hidden Hand," "Self-Made," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XC.

THE MOTHER AND SON.

By that hidden way
My guide and I did enter, to return
To the fair world, and, heedless of repose,
We climbed, he first, I following his steps,
Till on our view the beautiful lights of heaven
Dawned through a circular opening in the cave;
Whence issuing, we again beheld the stars.

Dante.

I LEAVE Mrs. Jay Llewellyn for Amy and Owen Wynne.

Religion had taught them resignation, and time had somewhat soothed the sharp pangs of memory. But they were poorer than when they visited them last. Amy was heavily burdened with care, and looked forward with dread to the approaching winter. While the villagers were very busy in making up their winter clothing, Amy got some plain sewing to do, for which she received a very small price. With this work, as long as it lasted, she filled up all her leisure time.

Owen minded the shop, and read medical books while waiting for customers in business hours. And in the evening, after the shop was closed, he studied his school-books.

Nancy worked out the price of her grey cloth cloak by doing the cooking and washing for the small household.

As the winter came on, their family expenses were reduced to the smallest scale.

They kept but one fire all day, and that was in the little air-tight parlour cooking-stove, that was set up in Amy's own room behind the shop. At night one candle set upon the table in the middle of the room served mistress, maid, and children. Their bill of fare was based upon the severest regimen that might keep body and soul together. Bread and tea for Amy; bread and molasses for Owen; and all these, together with an occasional bit of meat, because her work was the hardest, for Nancy. Sometimes these articles of food were varied, and there would be coffee and brown bread for the mother, bread and milk for the son, and all these, with an occasional bit of fish, for the servant.

But, notwithstanding all their efforts, they grew poorer and poorer. Work as they would, they could not pay their debts. Deny themselves as they might, they were forced, in order to live, to ask for more credit.

The reasons were partly these: The autumnal accession of needle-work in the village being over, Amy got little sewing to do, and Owen's customers of the shop gradually fell off. The truth is, that people began to find out that the medicine in the doctor's shop was dispensed by a mere boy; and they resolved to dispense with the use of it. They naturally, but most unjustly, distrusted Owen; and they prayed for the advent of some other practitioner to succeed the late Doctor Wynne. So the business of the shop fell at last to the mere sale of articles from the little showcase of fancy goods, such as perfumery, combs, brushes, &c., that stood upon the counter. And even this steadily diminished; for the stock was getting very low, and there was no money to renew it. And, besides, Mr. Lacy had a very large and handsome showcase, filled with the very same articles on his counter. And people preferred to choose from a large assortment, and to buy from him.

Thus, you see, even by the united efforts of the young mother and the little son, they made scarcely enough money to pay for house-rent and fuel. For food they had to run in debt.

Poor Amy! She was overpowered by a sense of humiliation and almost of dishonesty. She was profoundly ashamed of her debts, and excessively afraid of her creditors—especially of Durkee, the undertaker; Lacy, the draper; and Spicer, the grocer. These three were her creditors of the longest standing, and for the largest amount. Poor Amy was positively afraid and ashamed to look these men in the face. She felt such a dread of these creditors, that she kept within doors to avoid meeting them. And when she was obliged to go out, she always shunned the side of the streets they lived on. Or if absolutely compelled to pass their houses, she hung her head, and hurried along in a blaze of mortification.

And yet creditors never troubled her. In a little village everybody knows everything about everybody else. And, of course, men knew all about Mrs. Wynne's awful bereavement, and the deep misfortunes into which it had plunged her. And the very least of their thoughts was to add one feather's weight to the burdens that were already oppressing her. They knew that they might never be paid. And if not, they would certainly never persecute her. Meanwhile they would give her plenty of time and not trouble her with bills; and, at the very time that she would hurry past their doors with downcast eyes and burning cheeks hidden under her black crape veil, their only feeling towards her was one of the deepest compassion. Of course, each man of them would rather have been paid than not; but that was not the point. The point was, that whether they ever got their money from her or not, they would never dun that poor little suffering woman.

Meanwhile, Amy did not know this, and she lived in the constant fear of duns.

Her greatest dread of all was Mr. Spicer, the grocer, for she was not only unable to pay her debt to him, but she was obliged—to keep her body and soul together—steadily to increase it.

She laid in her small family provisions every week in very small retail quantities. Every Monday morning Amy wrote her modest little order, if such a pitiable, deprecatory little note could be called an order:

"MR. SPICER—Dear Sir,—Will you please to let me have a half a peck of flour, a quarter of a pound of tea, a quart of molasses, and a pound of candles, and charge them to my account; and indeed I will pay you as soon as ever I can. Yours respectfully,

"AMY WYNNE."

And every Monday morning Owen, with his little cloak over his shoulder, and his big basket on his arm, took this note and started for the grocer's shop, which was at the other end of the village.

And Amy sat over her small fire waiting, half in compunction for having sent the order at all, and half in anxiety lest it should not be attended to.

But Owen always came home with a smiling face and a full basket. And then Amy would exclaim:

"Oh! my love! I am so glad you have brought the things. I was so much afraid he would not send them. Did he say anything about the bill, Owen?"

"Oh, no, mother, dear; not a single word."

"Did he look cross, Owen, when you gave him the order?"

"Oh, no, mother, dear; he looked pleasant."

"He is very good! but I am afraid we shall wear out his patience at last," said Amy, with a sigh, as she took up the basket to put away the provisions; and felt that, with this food in the house, she and her little family had one more week's reprieve from starvation.

These and similar conversations took place between the mother and the son every Monday evening after the bringing of the basket home.

Yet, as the winter advanced, deeper and deeper, the little family sank into poverty and privation.

Amy got no more work at all. All the winter's sewing for the village housekeepers seemed to be quite finished.

And Owen got no more customers. People would not buy their medicines of him, and the fancy articles were all sold. There was nothing at all left. The little show case was quite empty. Owen tried in vain to get employment.

Their money gave out. There was none left to buy fuel, or to pay the current quarter's rent.

"And now," said Amy, despondently, "it only remains for Mr. Spicer to refuse to trust me any longer, and then we shall starve."

"Oh, no, mother, dear! not at all. People don't starve now-a-days. I never heard of anybody starving in my life; and I know they don't do it," replied Owen, nodding his head and speaking confidently, as if from an extremely long experience of men and manners. "Besides," he added, "Mr. Spicer ain't agoing to refuse to trust us. He knows better. And he knows if you can't pay him I will. I have told him as much. And he believes me, too. For he looked very good-natured over it. And he said—'All right, my boy. How is your mother and the young 'uns?' Now, mother, don't you be afraid of Mr. Spicer. He ain't afraid of you, that I can tell you."

And this was strictly true. And the secret was simply this: Amy's modest little account for groceries every week was really not ruining the good-natured and well-to-do grocer. He very willingly filled her little order each week, without ever expecting to get a penny of pay, and without caring a pin whether he did or not.

But Amy did not know all this, and so she sighed as she answered her little son:

"He is very good, Owen, love; very good. But he must get tired of trusting people who never pay."

"He will not get tired of trusting us, mother."

"Well, perhaps not. But even if he continues to send us food, how are we to cook it? We shall have no coal, and no money to buy any."

"Oh! as to firing, mother dear, we shall do very well. I have not much to do just now; the business of the shop is not very heavy, you know," said Owen, archly, "and so I can take my big basket and go out into the woods every morning, and in an hour's time gather sticks enough to keep our fire going all day."

"To be sure; so you might, love. I never thought of that. But, oh, Owen, I couldn't let you do it, either! It would be so hard on you, this cold weather; and we are going to have snow soon, too."

"Snow! oh, that's nothing. Us boys love snow."

"We boys, Owen."

"We boys, then, mother. You see I know better; only I talk so fast. We boys love snow, and I shall enjoy it."

"But your poor little shoes are so broken, Owen. And we have no money to buy new ones."

"Oh, that's nothing, neither. Nancy says her brother Tom can mend them as good as new. He is a cobbler by trade, you know. And Nancy says she will carry mine to him some night after I have gone to bed, and make him sit up late to finish them, so that I can have them when I get up in the morning. Won't that be nice?"

"Very."

"And so you see, mother dear, we shall get on very well."

"Yes, love, if I could only see my way through paying the rent."

"Oh, mother, now that is borrowing trouble! And dear father used to say we should never borrow trouble. Why, rent day is two months off yet."

"So it is, my love. Oh, Owen, I ought not to sadden your young life with all these gloomy doubts and fears of mine. But then, you know, I have no one else to speak to. You are my only confidant, my little son," she said, embracing him.

"Always bosom friends, you and I, mother dear, ain't we?"

"Always, little son."

"We'll always tell each other all our secrets, won't we?"

"Always, darling."

"You know Bill Spicer?—Mr. Spicer's little son. Well, he said he and Bob Durkee were sworn friends, and told each other all their secrets about robbing apple-trees and birds'-nests, and that. And he asked me who was my sworn friend, and I told him mother."

Again Amy drew her boy to her bosom, and kissed him as she answered:

"You could not have a safer one, dear."

The next day was Saturday, and directly after breakfast, Owen, having made an inspection of the coal-shed, came to his mother, and said:

"Mother, dear, there are but two large lumps left, and they won't more than last to-day; and as this is Saturday, and it does threaten snow, hadn't I better take the big basket and go into the woods now?"

"Yes, Owen, love, but wrap yourself up warm."

The boy got ready and set out in great glee. That day he went into the fuel free-trade with much zeal. In half-an-hour he returned with a basket full of sticks, and, without even stopping to warm himself, he hurried back for more. In half-a-dozen excursions to the woods, he brought back enough sticks to stock the shed with fuel to last for several days.

"I am very glad that to-morrow is Sunday, and there will be no work to do. For I am just about tired enough to drop," said the boy to himself, as he piled up the last basketful of sticks.

Then he washed his hands, and went in to supper.

"There, mother, dear," he said, cheerfully, as he helped himself to a slice of bread and poured a little honey on his plate—"there! now let the snow come as soon as it likes! The shed is half full of sticks. We have got fuel enough to keep us warm for a week."

"My dear boy! What a comfort you are to me, Owen. But oh, to think, after your hard day's work, you should have nothing better for supper than bread and honey!"

"Why, mother, I don't think there is anything in the world better than honey—I mean nicer to eat. It is so sweet, and thick, and smooth. I like to sop it up with my bread," said the boy, heartily.

"Do you, Owen, do you really like it?"

"Better than anything except gingerbread and toffee; and just as well as I do them."

"Since I can give you nothing better, I am glad you like it, dear."

"But, mother, I wish you would try some of it. I don't think you know how good it is. You take nothing but tea and bread."

"It is enough for me, Owen."

"But tea is such poor stuff!"

"It is stimulating. It is meat and drink both, to me, Owen. It keeps me up wonderfully."

"I just wish you'd be persuaded to take half o' my 'briled herrin'," said Nancy, who was cooking that savoury morsel on the little gridiron, for her own supper.

"No, thank you, Nancy, it would give me the headache; salt fish always does. Leave me to my own regimen."

"Your own regimen is a-killing of you! that's what it is. Whoever heard tell of a nussin' mother livin' off nuffin but tea and bread?—day in and day out, week in and week out, nothin' but tea and bread! It's a killin' of you, I say!"

"It keeps me up very well, Nancy. Bread, you know, is nutritious, and tea is stimulating."

"Well, s'posin' bread is nutritious and tea titillating! and s'pose they do keep you up, it's only for a little while, and then you drops right down into weakness again. Think I ain't got no eyes? Look at your cheeks now. As hollow as empty tea-cups, and as scarlet as strawberries! And just look at them two babies! both of them as thin as skeletons. And all for the want of you eatin' a-plenty of meat."

"But Nancy, my good woman, if the meat is not to be had, what is to be done? People must be content and trust in the Lord, even unto death. He who caused the few loaves and fishes to feed and to satisfy the multitude of several thousand men and women can cause my spare diet to nourish and support my life if in His wisdom He see fit to do so," said Amy, reverently.

"I know He can; and He can cause others to rise up and help you, too! Which, as long as you're talking 'bout religion, it puts in my head just what to do. And please goodness, I'll do it, if I live to see Monday morning. I'll walk myself right straight up to the parsonage-house, and I'll talk to the Reverent Mr. and Mrs. Morley. I will. And I'll ax 'em if they thinks sich doings as these ought to be done in a Christian impunity."

"Community, Nancy," said Amy, smiling.

"Community, then!"

"But, Nancy, you must not trouble Mr. and Mrs. Morley about me. I have no more claims on them than any other one of their large flock. And less, indeed, than any other, since I am a comparative stranger in the parish."

"Well, and what if you is an imperitive stranger?"

So much the more reason for their paying 'tention to you."

"Indeed you must not, Nancy. I will not have it. And if you disobey me in this matter we shall have a very serious falling out!"

"Shall we? Well, all I can say is how, if something ain't done, you will have a falling in all to yourself. And it will be into a hole."

And here the conversation ceased between the mistress and servant.

Owen had been a silent listener to the altercation. Her poor boy had always taken his mother's word for the statement that tea and bread kept up her strength; and he had mistaken her red cheeks and sparkling eyes for the signs of returning health and spirits. But now he recalled to mind all his father's care of his mother, and especially his continual watchfulness that she should take plenty of exercise in the open air to give her an appetite, and then eat plenty of meat to give her nourishment. And Owen ruminated:

"As soon as the weather permits I will coax her to walk out every day. And I will trap birds for her. I might have done that long ago; only I could not bear to take the poor little things that way; but, then, when my mother's health is concerned, that is another thing." And he resolved to go to the woods and set traps to catch birds for his mother early on Monday morning.

Amy and her son having finished their frugal meal, arose from the table to make way for Nancy to eat her supper.

"And now Master Owen, child, you go to bed, so I can have your shoes to carry to brother Tom to mend to-night; and you can have 'em to wear to church to-morrow morning," said Nancy, as she laid her "briled herrin'" on her plate, and poured out a large cup of tea for herself.

"Yes, Owen, love, you look tired to death. Go to bed, my child," said Amy.

"Are you going to sit up late, mother?" anxiously inquired the boy.

"No, love; only until I bind the cuffs of your Sunday jacket, and mend my black gloves, and then I shall follow you up-stairs."

"Mother, dear, do the two little sisters keep you awake at night?" inquired Owen, looking anxiously at Amy's fatigued countenance.

"No, love—not often."

"I hear them cry sometimes in the night."

"That is the other babe; mine never cries."

"Mother, I do wish you would let Nancy take one little sister at night and let me take the other. Indeed we could take care of them. Indeed you oughtn't to be kept awake by them. You know dear father used to say that you should never lose your rest."

"I do not lose much rest, Owen. And as for the children, no-one here but myself could take proper care of them at night. Do not wear that troubled little face, my darling boy. I shall do very well with the children. Good night, love. Say your prayers and go to bed," said Amy, drawing her little son to her bosom, and tenderly embracing him.

Owen returned her caress, and then slipped off his shoes and gave them to Nancy to be mended, and then he went up-stairs to bed.

Owen now slept in the little back room over the sitting-room, and adjoining his mother's chamber, which was over the front shop. Heavily tasked as his childish strength had been, Owen could not sleep. Nancy's words had filled him with anxiety on his mother's account. And he lay awake, anxiously watching and listening until he heard her come upstairs and go to bed. Then, indeed, exhausted by fatigue, he yielded to the approach of sleep.

The next morning the sky was darkened with heavy, lowering, white snow-clouds.

Owen and his mother went to church as usual; but they returned home in a snow-storm.

It was the same snow-storm through which Arthur Powis, in a distant part of the country, rode day and night in search of his lost love.

CHAPTER XCI.

KINDNESS AND COMFORT.

O'er better waves to speed her rapid course
The light bark of my genius wafts her sail,
Well pleased to leave so cruel seas behind;
And of that second region I will tell. *Dante.*

On Monday morning the ground was covered with snow, about three feet deep, and almost every fence was hidden, and every landmark obliterated.

Amy looked out of the front shop-window in perfect dismay. This was the regular day for sending to the grocery for supplies, and the week's provisions were so nearly out that Nancy was using the last for breakfast.

Owen was all eagerness and glee. The short-lived anxiety of childhood had passed away from his mind for the present.

"Make haste, Nancy," he said, dancing about the stove. "Hurry with the breakfast, Nancy! You know this is Monday, and directly after breakfast I have to go to Mr. Spicer's for the week's groceries."

And he seemed really impatient to be out in the beautiful snow.

"Oh, Owen, love, you can never go out on such a day as this! You would freeze or catch your death of cold," said Amy, coming in from the shop.

"Oh, mother dear, the snow don't hurt me boys!" said Owen, roughly.

"Us boys, Owen."

"There now! the other day when I said us boys, you said us boys! and now that I say we boys, you say us boys! There's no pleasing you, mother!" said Owen, mischievously.

Amy turned quickly round in surprise; but when she saw the twinkle of her little son's blue eyes, she smiled, and answered:

"You know the difference well enough, you monkey."

After breakfast Owen wrapped himself up in his little cloak, took his big basket on his arm, and presented himself, saying:

"Now then, mother, dear, I'm all ready. Is the note written?"

"Owen, look how deep the snow is, and how fast it is still falling! and it is such a long way to Spicer's. Take off your things, dear; I cannot consent to your going out, indeed."

"All right, mother," said Owen, as he reluctantly took off his cloak, and resigned himself to stay indoors.

They had nothing whatever in the house for the second meal of that day.

All day long Amy sat in her little low sewing-chair, with her busy fingers engaged in mending the children's clothes, and her foot on the rocker of the cradle, where the two infants slumbered.

Owen sat with his books and slate before him, studying his lessons.

Nancy was busying herself up-stairs and down, getting together the week's washing against the time when the sky would clear off.

Late in the day, when they were very hungry, Amy went searching about in all the cupboards in the sitting-room and in the kitchen, to see if she could find a stray piece of bread. She found half of a very stale loaf, and she found an onion, probably the property of Nancy.

"Now, if I had a little piece of butter, I could make a savoury dish of this piece of stale bread and this onion," said Amy, bringing her "findings" into the sitting-room.

"Is it a bit of butter you want?" called Nancy from an upper room.

"Yes, Nancy."

"Well, just look into the kitchen cupboard, kivered up under the little yellow bowl, and you'll find a bit of that yellow print as brother Tom give me o' Saturday-night."

Amy went and got the butter. Then she filled a kettle of water and set it on the stove. Then she cut and toasted her stale bread, took a medium sized bowl, laid in the bottom of it a layer of the toast, cut over that a thin slice of onion, and a flake of butter, with a little pepper and salt, then another layer of dry toast, then a little more onion, butter, pepper and salt, and so on until the bowl was half full. Then she filled it up with boiling water, covered it closely, and set it on the stove to steep for fifteen minutes. At the end of that time Amy set the table, and placed upon it as cheap, simple, and savoury a little dish as ever a poor mother and son sat down to eat.

Half of the repast they left on the stove to keep warm for Nancy.

A little later in the afternoon the snow ceased to fall, and the sky cleared.

"Oh! mother dear," exclaimed Owen, who was standing at the front shop window, "do come and look how beautiful it is out! The sun is setting yellow as gold; and the boys are all out in the street, snow-balling. I can go to Spicer's now, and I can get back before dark; and you can have a cup of tea."

Amy came to his side to make an examination of the weather.

"Yes, love, I think you can go now; but wrap yourself up warm," she said.

And, while Owen went to prepare himself, she stepped up to the little shop desk to write the order.

With how much doubt, and shame, and compunction poor Amy wrote that weekly order no one but herself knew!

She had a faint hope of paying it some day or other, but when? Who could tell? Would her creditor believe in her promises of payment, and continue to renew the credit, and increase the amount from week to week? Or did she herself even believe them? Were they perfectly sincere? Amy did not know.

She felt like a swindler—a person who was obtaining goods under false pretences. And if the grocer should refuse to let her have any more, she felt that she could not blame him in the least.

Her feelings so overcame her, that, while writing this little order, she had to turn her head aside to weep. Still one large tear fell upon the writing, and blotted out her piteous little promise to pay. Eloquent tear! more powerful than any promise could be.

By the time the note was finished, Owen came with his little cloak around him, and his big basket on his arm.

"I have blotted it, Owen; and I haven't got any more paper to write another. But tell him, Owen, that I will pay him as soon as ever I can—indeed, I will; and tell him how much obliged I am to him for trusting me," she said.

"All right, mother dear; I'll tell him. But he knows all that. Don't you be afraid of Mr. Spicer, mother," replied the boy, as he took the order and hurried away.

Amy resumed her seat by the cradle of the children, who were now both awake and both crying. They had grown so large now that she could not take both in her arms at the same time. So, naturally, she took up her own child first, leaving the other one to wail a few minutes longer in the cradle. Then Nancy came and took up the other one.

When the children were once more asleep, Amy resumed her needle-work, and worked on while waiting for the return of Owen.

Nancy put on the tea-kettle, and set the table, so as to be ready to serve tea as soon as the boy should get home.

Amy waited on—in how much doubt, suspense and anxiety! For, notwithstanding all that Owen had said to encourage her, she dreaded that Mr. Spicer should become impatient and disgusted at her poor little unpromising promises of payment, and should send the boy home with an empty basket and an angry message. And she was sure she would not blame him if he did. Only, in that case, what should she and her little ones do?

And she thought of her little son—of what an inestimable blessing he was to her; how patient of work and of want; making no boyish complaints for lost boyish pleasures.

"Poor little fellow!" said Amy to herself; "since his father died he has not had a single indulgence of any sort—not even a sixpence of spending money, not even a bit of gingerbread, or a stick of toffee. How I wish I could make him a cake for Christmas!"

A long time Amy had to wait for her son that evening, much longer than ever before. It grew dark, and the candle was lighted and set upon the table, and Amy drew up to it, to go on with her sewing. But frequently she jumped up and looked out of the shop-door, to see if her little son was coming. A great anxiety was creeping over her. She thought of another fatal night of watching, and how it ended.

"Oh, if something should have happened to my precious boy, I should die! I should die!" she cried, coming back from a last, long look up the dark streets, and throwing herself into her chair.

"Oh, Nancy!" she asked, "what do you think is keeping him?"

"He's playing snow-ball!" answered Nancy, doggedly.

"It is not so! You know my darling boy never stays when I send him of an errand!" exclaimed the mother, almost angrily.

"Well! boys will be boys, that is all I can say!"

"Oh, dear! it seems to me that if my precious child was back with me again, I would not mind any other trouble in the world!" said Amy, wringing her hands, and jumping up to run to the door once more.

"Now, Mistress Amy, don't you keep on exposing of yourself so, going out there in the cold, with nothing round you! You'll get your death, and then what'll become of the children? Don't you bother about Master Owen! He ain't so very late, and just you remember how much longer it takes to walk through the snow than it does to walk on dry ground," said Nancy.

But Amy, without heeding her, continued her lamentations.

And just then voices were heard at the door. Young, fresh, boyish voices full of glee. And one of them was that of Owen.

"Thanky, Bill," he said.

"You're welcome! I'll go now, Owen," said the other.

"Oh, no, don't—come in, Bill!"

"I don't like to!"

"Oh, yes! mother'll be glad."

Amy put a stop to this boyish talk by tearing open the door, and exclaiming:

"Thank heaven, you have come! Oh! my dear boy, I was so uneasy about you! What kept you so late, Owen?"

"Why, you see, mother dear, Christmas times and the shop full of people buying things for the holidays—I say, mother! Here's Bill Spicer. He helped me all the way home with this big basket, and now he won't come in! Make him come in, mother."

"Come in, my dear, and warm and rest yourself. I thank you very much for helping Owen with the basket. It was very kind of you."

"Oh, no, it was fun!" answered the boy, a rascally-checked lad of about the same age as Owen.

"But come in, my dear," persisted Amy, seeing that he still hung back.

"Oh, no, ma'am, thank you! I'll help Owen in with this, and then I must run home! Father'll want me!" said the boy, as, in conjunction with Owen, he lifted the heavy basket over the threshold of the door, and then ducked a short nod and ran off.

"And so he sent the things once more! How good of him! Oh! how good to keep on trusting me against hope!" said Amy, fervently.

"I tell you, mother dear, you needn't be afraid of his not sending the things! As long as you order them, he'll send them," said Owen, confidently.

"I sometimes think he will. But, oh! Owen, that very thing it is that makes me feel almost dishonest. Oh, Owen, if I should never be able to pay him!"

"I tell you, mother dear, I'll pay him some of these days—yes, pay him all! Interest and compound interest too!"

"Heaven send that you may, my dear! But now take up the basket, Owen, and bring it into the back room."

Owen made a feint of lifting the basket, and then dropped it heavily, and drew a long breath.

"What is the matter, my dear?"

"Why, mother, I can't lift it—it is too heavy. If I could have lifted it, Bill Spicer needn't have come all this way to help me, you know."

"Why, my dear, it is no heavier than usual."

"Oh! isn't it neither? you just try to lift it, mother."

"But I didn't order anything more than I always do," said Amy, as she attempted to lift the covered basket, and dropped it. "What have you got in it, Owen? I hope you haven't run in extra debt."

"Oh, no, mother dear. Call Nancy to help me in with it, and then you'll see what there is, and I will tell you all about it."

Nancy was called from the back room, and she came forward and raised the heavy basket as though it were only a trifling, impertinent interruption, at the same time ordering "Master Owen" to shake the snow off his boots and trousers before coming into the back parlour.

Owen obeyed her, and then locked and barred the shop door, and followed with his mother into the back room.

Amy knelt down by the basket, lifted the cover, and exclaimed in dismay:

"Oh! Owen, my dear, this is very extravagant. I never ordered a quarter part of these things! It would have been a sin for me to order luxuries when I cannot even afford to pay for necessities!"

"All right, mother; you won't have to pay for them. They are Mr. Spicer's Christmas gift to us. Oh! mother, you ought to have seen him when he read your order. He looked at that big blot so! I saw him do it, and frown like anything, and clear his throat; and first I almost thought he took it as a slight for you to send him a blotted note. So I just told him what you told me, that you had blotted it by accident, and you had no more paper, else you would have made a fair copy. But he said, 'Nonsense!' And then he told his shopman to get the things you ordered, and put them into the basket. And then he told me to wait until he had done serving the customers that were already in the shop. And then, when he was done, he went to work and put up all these parcels, without weighing them, or charging them, and put them in the basket with his own hands, and told me to take them home to you for a Christmas gift. And he called his son Bill, and ordered him to help me carry the basket, which he did willingly. Bill is a nice boy, mother; just as nice a boy as his father."

"Oh, how good of him! Oh, how good! And I wronging the man by thinking he wouldn't trust me for the necessities of life I was in want of. And here he is giving me the luxuries as a free gift. Heaven bless him, Owen," said Amy, fervently.

"Of course heaven will bless him, mother."

"But now the things. Take them out, Owen, dear, and let me see what they are."

"And take out the paper of tea first. The kettle has been boiling this hour, and I want to set the tea to draw," said Nancy.

"I can't, Nancy. The tea and all the things that mother ordered are at the bottom of the basket. I must take out the Christmas gifts first," said Owen, kneeling before the basket, and lifting out first a fine pair of fowls.

"There, mother! a farmer brought those into Mr

"Oh! my love! I am so glad you have brought the things. I was so much afraid he would not send them. Did he say anything about the bill, Owen?"

"Oh, no, mother, dear; not a single word."

"Did he look cross, Owen, when you gave him the order?"

"Oh, no, mother, dear; he looked pleasant."

"He is very good! But I am afraid we shall wear out his patience at last," said Amy, with a sigh, as she took up the basket to put away the provisions; and felt that, with this food in the house, she and her little family had one more week's reprieve from starvation.

These and similar conversations took place between the mother and the son every Monday evening after the bringing of the basket home.

Yet, as the winter advanced, deeper and deeper, the little family sank into poverty and privation.

Amy got no more work at all. All the winter's sewing for the village housekeepers seemed to be quite finished.

And Owen got no more customers. People would not buy their medicines of him, and the fancy articles were all sold. There was nothing at all left. The little show case was quite empty. Owen tried in vain to get employment.

Their money gave out. There was none left to buy fuel, or to pay the current quarter's rent.

"And now," said Amy, despondently, "it only remains for Mr. Spicer to refuse to trust me any longer, and then we shall starve."

"Oh, no, mother, dear! not at all. People don't starve now-a-days. I never heard of anybody starving in my life; and I know they don't do it," replied Owen, nodding his head and speaking confidently, as if from an extremely long experience of men and manners. "Besides," he added, "Mr. Spicer ain't a-going to refuse to trust us. He knows better. And he knows if you can't pay him I will. I have told him as much. And he believes me, too. For he looked very good-natured over it. And he said—'All right, my boy. How is your mother and the young 'uns?' Now, mother, don't you be afraid of Mr. Spicer. He ain't afraid of you, that I can tell you."

And this was strictly true. And the secret was simply this: Amy's modest little account for groceries every week was really not ruining the good-natured and well-to-do grocer. He very willingly filled her little order each week, without ever expecting to get a penny of pay, and without caring a pin whether he did or not.

But Amy did not know all this, and so she sighed as she answered her little son:

"He is very good, Owen, love; very good. But he must get tired of trusting people who never pay."

"He will not get tired of trusting us, mother."

"Well, perhaps not. But even if he continues to send us food, how are we to cook it? We shall have no coal, and no money to buy any."

"Oh! as to firing, mother dear, we shall do very well. I have not much to do just now; the business of the shop is not very heavy, you know," said Owen, proudly, "and so I can take my big basket and go out into the woods every morning, and in an hour's time gather sticks enough to keep our fire going all day."

"To be sure; so you might, love. I never thought of that. But, oh, Owen, I couldn't let you do it, either! It would be so hard on you, this cold weather; and we are going to have snow soon, too."

"Snow! oh, that's nothing. Us boys love snow."

"We boys, Owen?"

"We boys, then, mother. You see I know better; only I talk so fast. We boys love snow, and I shall enjoy it."

"But your poor little shoes are so broken, Owen. And we have no money to buy new ones."

"Oh, that's nothing, neither. Nancy says her brother Tom can mend them as good as new. He is a cobbler by trade, you know. And Nancy says she will carry mine to him some night after I have gone to bed, and make him sit up late to finish them, so that I can have them when I get up in the morning. Won't that be nice?"

"Very."

"And so you see, mother dear, we shall get on very well."

"Yes, love, if I could only see my way through paying the rent."

"Oh, mother, now that is borrowing trouble! And dear father used to say we should never borrow trouble. Why, rent day is two months off yet."

"So it is, my love. Oh, Owen, I ought not to sadden your young life with all these gloomy doubts and fears of mine. But then, you know, I have no one else to speak to. You are my only confidant, my little son," she said, embracing him.

"Always boom friends, you and I, mother dear, ain't we?"

"Always, little son."

"We'll always tell each other all our secrets, won't we?"

"Always, darling."

"You know Bill Spicer?—Mr. Spicer's little son. Well, he said he and Bob Durkee were sworn friends, and told each other all their secrets about robbing apple-trees and birds'-nests, and that. And he asked me who was my sworn friend, and I told him mother."

Again Amy drew her boy to her bosom, and kissed him as she answered:

"You could not have a safer one, dear."

The next day was Saturday, and directly after breakfast, Owen, having made an inspection of the coal-shed, came to his mother, and said:

"Mother, dear, there are but two large lumps left, and they won't more than last to-day; and as this is Saturday, and it does threaten snow, hadn't I better take the big basket and go into the woods now?"

"Yes, Owen, love, but wrap yourself up warm."

The boy got ready and set out in great glee. That day he went into the fuel-free-trade with much zeal. In half-an-hour he returned with a basket full of sticks, and, without even stopping to warm himself, he hurried back for more. In half-a-dozen excursions to the woods, he brought back enough sticks to stock the shed with fuel to last for several days.

"I am very glad that to-morrow is Sunday, and there will be no work to do. For I am just about tired enough to drop," said the boy to himself, as he piled up the last basketful of sticks.

Then he washed his hands, and went in to supper.

"There, mother, dear," he said, cheerfully, as he helped himself to a slice of bread and poured a little honey on his plate—"there! now let the snow come as soon as it likes! The shed is half full of sticks. We have got fuel enough to keep us warm for a week."

"My dear boy! What a comfort you are to me, Owen. But oh, to think, after your hard day's work, you should have nothing better for supper than bread and honey!"

"Why, mother, I don't think there is anything in the world better than honey—I mean nicer to eat. It is so sweet, and thick, and smooth. I like to sop it up with my bread," said the boy, heartily.

"Do you, Owen, do you really like it?"

"Better than anything except gingerbread and toffee; and just as well as I do them."

"Since I can give you nothing better, I am glad you like it, dear."

"But, mother, I wish you would try some of it. I don't think you know how good it is. You take nothing but tea and bread."

"It is enough for me, Owen."

"But tea is such poor stuff!"

"It is stimulating. It is meat and drink both, to me, Owen. It keeps me up wonderfully."

"I just wish you'd be persuaded to take half o' my brilled herring," said Nancy, who was cooking that savoury morsel on the little gridiron, for her own supper.

"No, thank you, Nancy, it would give me the headache; but fish always does. Leave me to my own regimen."

"Your own regimen is a-killing of you! that's what it is. Whoever heard tell of a nussin' mother livin' off nuffin but tea and bread?—day in and day out, week in and week out, nothin' but tea and bread! It's a killin' of you, I say!"

"It keeps me up very well, Nancy. Bread, you know, is nutritious, and tea is stimulating."

"Well, s'posin' bread is nutritious and tea titillatin'! and s'pose they do keep you up, it's only for a little while, and then you drops right down into weakness again. Think I ain't got no eyes? Look at your cheeks now. As hollow as empty tea-cups, and as scarlet as strawberries! And just look at them two babies! both of them as thin as skeletons. And all for the want of you eatin' a-plenty of meat."

"But Nancy, my good woman; if the meat is not to be had, what is to be done? People must be content and trust in the Lord, even unto death. He who caused the few leaves and fishes to feed and to satisfy the multitude of several thousand men and women can cause my spare diet to nourish and support my life if in His wisdom He see fit to do so," said Amy, reverently.

"I know He can; and He can cause others to rise up and help you, too! Which, as long as you're talkin' 'bout religion, it puts in my head just what to do. And please goodness, I'll do it, if I live to see Monday morning. I'll walk myself right straight up to the parsonage-house, and I'll talk to the Reverent Mr. and Mrs. Morley, I will. And I'll ax 'em if they thinks sich doings as these ought to be done in a Christian impunity."

"Community, Nancy," said Amy, smiling.

"Community, then!"

"But, Nancy, you must not trouble Mr. and Mrs. Morley about me. I have no more claims on them than any other one of their large flock. And less, indeed, than any other, since I am a comparative stranger in the parish."

"Well, and what if you is an imperitive stranger?"

So much the more reason for their paying 'ention to you."

"Indeed you must not, Nancy. I will not have it. And if you disobey me in this matter we shall have a very serious falling out!"

"Shall we? Well, all I can say is how, if something ain't done, you will have a falling in all to yourself. And it will be into a hole."

And here the conversation ceased between the mistress and servant.

Owen had been a silent listener to the altercation. Her poor boy had always taken his mother's word for the statement that tea and bread kept up her strength; and he had mistaken her red cheeks and sparkling eyes for the signs of returning health and spirits. But now he recalled to mind all his father's care of his mother, and especially his continual watchfulness that she should take plenty of exercise in the open air to give her an appetite, and then eat plenty of meat to give her nourishment. And Owen ruminated:

"As soon as the weather permits I will coax her to walk out every day. And I will trap birds for her. I might have done that long ago; only I could not bear to take the poor little things that way; but, then, when my mother's health is concerned, that is another thing. And he resolved to go to the woods and set traps to catch birds for his mother early on Monday morning."

Amy and her son having finished their frugal meal, arose from the table to make way for Nancy to eat her supper.

"And now Master Owen, child, you go to bed, so I can have your shoes to carry to brother Tom to mend to-night; and you can have 'em to wear to church to-morrow morning," said Nancy, as she laid her "brilled herring" on her plate, and poured out a large cup of tea for herself.

"Yes, Owen, love, you look tired to death. Go to bed, my child," said Amy.

"Are you going to sit up late, mother?" anxiously inquired the boy.

"No, love; only until I bind the cuffs of your Sunday jacket, and mend my black gloves, and then I shall follow you up-stairs."

"Mother, dear, do the two little sisters keep you awake at night?" inquired Owen, looking anxiously at Amy's fatigued countenance.

"No, love—not often."

"I hear them cry sometimes in the night."

"That is the other babe; mine never cries."

"Mother, I do wish you would let Nancy take one little sister at night and let me take the other. Indeed we could take care of them. Indeed you oughtn't to be kept awake by them. You know dear father used to say that you should never lose your rest."

"I do not lose much rest, Owen. And as for the children, no-one here but myself could take proper care of them at night. Do not wear that troubled little face, my darling boy. I shall do very well with the children. Good night, love. Say your prayers and go to bed," said Amy, drawing her little son to her bosom, and tenderly embracing him.

Owen returned her caress, and then slipped off his shoes and gave them to Nancy to be mended, and then he went up-stairs to bed.

Owen now slept in the little back room over the sitting-room, and adjoining his mother's chamber, which was over the front shop. Heavily tasked as his childish strength had been, Owen could not sleep. Nancy's words had filled him with anxiety on his mother's account. And he lay awake, anxiously watching and listening until he heard her come upstairs and go to bed. Then, indeed, exhausted by fatigue, he yielded to the approach of sleep.

The next morning the sky was darkened with heavy, lowering, white snow-clouds.

Owen and his mother went to church as usual; but they returned home in a snow-storm.

It was the same snow-storm through which Arthur Powis, in a distant part of the country, rode day and night in search of his lost love.

CHAPTER XCI.

KINDNESS AND COMFORT.

O'er better waves to speed her rapid course
The light bark of my genius waits her sail.
Well pleased to leave so cruel sea behind;
And of that second region I will tell.

Dante.

ON Monday morning the ground was covered with snow, about three feet deep, and almost every fence was hidden, and every landmark obliterated.

Amy looked out of the front shop-window in perfect dismay. This was the regular day for sending to the grocery for supplies, and the week's provisions were so nearly out that Nancy was using the last for breakfast.

Owen was all eagerness and glee. The short-lived anxiety of childhood had passed away from his mind for the present.

"Make haste, Nancy," he said, dancing about the stove. "Hurry with the breakfast, Nancy! You know this is Monday, and directly after breakfast I have to go to Mr. Spicer's for the week's groceries."

And he seemed really impatient to be out in the beautiful snow.

"Oh, Owen, love, you can never go out on such a day as this! You would freeze or catch your death of cold," said Amy, coming in from the shop.

"Oh, mother dear, the snow don't hurt me boys!" said Owen, roguishly.

"Es boys, Owen."

"There now! the other day when I said as boys, you said we boys! and now that I say we boys, you say we boys! There's no pleasing you, mother!" said Owen, mischievously.

Amy turned quickly round in surprise; but when she saw the twinkle of her little son's blue eyes, she smiled, and answered:

"You know the difference well enough, you monkey."

After breakfast Owen wrapped himself up in his little cloak, took his big basket on his arm, and presented himself, saying:

"Now then, mother, dear, I'm all ready. Is the note written?"

"Owen, look how deep the snow is, and how fast it is still falling! and it is such a long way to Spicer's. Take off your things, dear; I cannot consent to your going out, indeed."

"All right, mother," said Owen, as he reluctantly took off his cloak, and resigned himself to stay indoors.

They had nothing whatever in the house for the second meal of that day.

All day long Amy sat in her little low sewing-chair, with her busy fingers engaged in mending the children's clothes, and her foot on the rocker of the cradle, where the two infants alumbered.

Owen sat with his books and slate before him, studying his lessons.

Nancy was busying herself up-stairs and down, getting together the week's washing against the time when the sky would clear off.

Late in the day, when they were very hungry, Amy went searching about in all the cupboards in the sitting-room and in the kitchen, to see if she could find a stray piece of bread. She found half of a very stale loaf, and she found an onion, probably the property of Nancy.

"Now, if I had a little piece of butter, I could make a savoury dish of this piece of stale bread and this onion," said Amy, bringing her "findings" into the sitting-room.

"Is it a bit of butter you want?" called Nancy from an upper room.

"Yes, Nancy."

"Well, just look into the kitchen cupboard, kivered up under the little yellow bowl, and you'll find a bit of that yellow print as brother Tom give me o' Saturday-night."

Amy went and got the butter. Then she filled a kettle of water and set it on the stove. Then she cut and toasted her stale bread, took a medium sized bowl, laid in the bottom of it a layer of the toast, cut over that a thin slice of onion, and a flake of butter, with a little pepper and salt, then another layer of dry toast, then a little more onion, butter, pepper and salt, and so on until the bowl was half full. Then she filled it up with boiling water, covered it closely, and set it on the stove to steep for fifteen minutes. At the end of that time Amy set the table, and placed upon it as cheap, simple, and savoury a little dish as ever a poor mother and son sat down to eat.

Half of the repast they left on the stove to keep warm for Nancy.

A little later in the afternoon the snow ceased to fall, and the sky cleared.

"Oh! mother dear," exclaimed Owen, who was standing at the front shop window, "do come and look how beautiful it is out! The sun is setting yellow as gold; and the boys are all out in the street, snow-balling. I can go to Spicer's now, and I can get back before dark; and you can have a cup of tea."

Amy came to his side to make an examination of the weather.

"Yes, love, I think you can go now; but wrap yourself up warm," she said.

And, while Owen went to prepare himself, she stepped up to the little shop-deck to write the order.

With how much doubt, and shame, and compunction poor Amy wrote that weekly order no one but herself knew!

She had a faint hope of paying it some day or other, but when? Who could tell? Would her creditor believe in her promises of payment, and continue to renew the credit, and increase the account from week to week? Or did she herself even believe them? Were they perfectly sincere? Amy did not know.

She felt like a swindler—a person who was obtaining goods under false pretences. And if the grocer should refuse to let her have any more, she felt that she could not blame him in the least.

Her feelings so overcame her, that, while writing this little order, she had to turn her head aside to weep. Still one large tear fell upon the writing, and blotted out her piteous little promise to pay. Eloquent tear! more powerful than any promise could be.

By the time the note was finished, Owen came with his little cloak around him, and his big basket on his arm.

"I have blotted it, Owen; and I haven't got any more paper to write another. But tell him, Owen, that I will pay him as soon as ever I can—indeed, I will; and tell him how much obliged I am to him for trusting me," she said.

"All right, mother dear; I'll tell him. But he knows all that. Don't you be afraid of Mr. Spicer, mother," replied the boy, as he took the order and hurried away.

Amy resumed her seat by the cradle of the children, who were now both awake and both crying. They had grown so large now that she could not take both in her arms at the same time. So, naturally, she took up her own child first, leaving the other one to wall a few minutes longer in the cradle. Then Nancy came and took up the other one.

When the children were once more asleep, Amy resumed her needle-work, and worked on while waiting for the return of Owen.

Nancy put on the tea-kettle, and set the table, so as to be ready to serve tea as soon as the boy should get home.

Amy waited on—in how much doubt, suspense and anxiety! For, notwithstanding all that Owen had said to encourage her, she dreaded that Mr. Spicer should become impatient and disgusted at her poor little unpromising promises of payment, and should send the boy home with an empty basket and an angry message. And she was sure she would not blame him if he did. Only, in that case, what should she and her little ones do?

And she thought of her little son—of what an inestimable blessing he was to her; how patient of work and of want; making no boyish complaints for lost boyish pleasures.

"Poor little fellow!" said Amy to herself; "since his father died he has not had a single indulgence of any sort—not even a sipping of spending money, not even a bit of gingerbread, or a stick of toffee. How I wish I could make him a cake for Christmas!"

A long time Amy had to wait for her son that evening, much longer than ever before. It grew dark, and the candle was lighted and set upon the table, and Amy drew up to it, to go on with her sewing. But frequently she jumped up and looked out of the shop-door, to see if her little son was coming. A great anxiety was creeping over her. She thought of another fatal night of watching, and how it ended.

"Oh, if something should have happened to my precious boy, I should die! I should die!" she cried, coming back from a last, long look up the dark streets, and throwing herself into her chair.

"Oh, Nancy!" she asked, "what do you think is keeping him?"

"He's playing snow-ball!" answered Nancy, doggedly.

"It is not so! You know my darling boy never stays when I send him of an errand!" exclaimed the mother, almost angrily.

"Well! boys will be boys, that is all I can say!"

"Oh, dear! it seems to me that if my precious child was back with me again, I would not mind any other trouble in the world!" said Amy, wringing her hands, and jumping up to run to the door once more.

"Now, Mistress Amy, don't you keep on exposing of yourself so, going out there in the cold, with nothing round you! You'll get your death, and then what'll become of the children? Don't you bother about Master Owen! He ain't so very late, and just you remember how much longer it takes to walk through the snow than it does to walk on dry ground," said Nancy.

But Amy, without heeding her, continued her lamentations.

And just then voices were heard at the door. Young, fresh, boyish voices full of glee. And one of them was that of Owen.

"Thanky, Bill," he said.

"You're welcome! I'll go now, Owen," said the other.

"Oh, no, don't—come in, Bill!"

"I don't like to!"

"Oh, yes! mother'll be glad."

Amy put a stop to this boyish talk by tearing open the door, and exclaiming:

"Thank heaven, you have come! Oh! my dear boy, I was so uneasy about you! What kept you so late, Owen?"

"Why, you see, mother dear, Christmas times and the shop full of people buying things for the holidays—I say, mother! Here's Bill Spicer. He helped me all the way home with this big basket, and now he won't come in! Make him come in, mother."

"Come in, my dear, and warm and rest yourself. I thank you very much for helping Owen with the basket. It was very kind of you."

"Oh, no, it was fun!" answered the boy, a ruddy-cheeked lad of about the same age as Owen.

"But come in, my dear," persisted Amy, seeing that he still hung back.

"Oh, no, ma'am, thank you! I'll help Owen in with this, and then I must run home! Father'll want me!" said the boy, as, in conjunction with Owen, he lifted the heavy basket over the threshold of the door, and then ducked a short nod and ran off.

"And so he sent the things once more! How good of him! Oh! how good to keep on trusting me against hope!" said Amy, fervently.

"I tell you, mother dear, you needn't be afraid of his not sending the things! As long as you order them, he'll send them," said Owen, confidently.

"I sometimes think he will. But, oh! Owen, that very thing it is that makes me feel almost dishonest. Oh, Owen, if I should never be able to pay him!"

"I tell you, mother dear, I'll pay him some of these days—yes, pay him all! Interest and compound interest too!"

"Heaven send that you may, my dear! But now take up the basket, Owen, and bring it into the back room."

Owen made a feint of lifting the basket, and then dropped it heavily, and drew a long breath.

"What is the matter, my dear?"

"Why, mother, I can't lift it—it is too heavy. If I could have lifted it, Bill Spicer needn't have come all this way to help me, you know."

"Why, my dear, it is no heavier than usual."

"Oh! isn't it neither? you just try to lift it, mother."

"But I didn't order anything more than I always do," said Amy, as she attempted to lift the covered basket, and dropped it. "What have you got in it, Owen? I hope you haven't run in extra debt."

"Oh, no, mother dear. Call Nancy to help me in with it, and then you'll see what there is, and I will tell you all about it."

Nancy was called from the back room, and she came forward and raised the heavy basket as though it were only a trifling, impertinent interruption, at the same time ordering, "Master Owen" to shake the snow off his boots and trousers before coming into the back parlour.

Owen obeyed her, and then looked and barred the shop door, and followed with his mother into the back room.

Amy knelt down by the basket, lifted the cover, and exclaimed in dismay:

"Oh! Owen, my dear, this is very extravagant. I never ordered a quarter part of these things! It would have been a sin for me to order luxuries when I cannot even afford to pay for necessities!"

"All right, mother; you won't have to pay for them. They are Mr. Spicer's Christmas gift to us. Oh! mother, you ought to have seen him when he read your order. He looked at that big blot so! I saw him do it, and frown like anything, and clear his throat; and first I almost thought he took it as a slight for you to send him a blotted note. So I just told him what you told me, that you had blotted it by accident, and you had no more paper, else you would have made a fair copy. But he said, 'Nonsense!' And then he told his shopman to get the things you ordered, and put them into the basket. And then he told me to wait until he had done serving the customers that were already in the shop. And then, when he was done, he went to work and put up all these parcels, without weighing them, or charging them, and put them in the basket with his own hands, and told me to take them home to you for a Christmas gift. And he called his son Bill, and ordered him to help me carry the basket, which he did willingly. Bill is a nice boy, mother; just as nice a boy as his father."

"Oh, how good of him! Oh, how good! And I wronging the man by thinking he wouldn't trust me for the necessities of life I was in want of. And here he is giving me the luxuries as a free gift. Heaven bless him, Owen," said Amy, fervently.

"Of course heaven will bless him, mother."

"But now the things. Take them out, Owen, dear, and let me see what they are."

"And take out the paper of tea first. The kettle has been boiling this hour, and I want to set the tea to draw," said Nancy.

"I can't, Nancy. The tea and all the things that mother ordered are at the bottom of the basket. I must take out the Christmas gifts first," said Owen, kneeling before the basket, and lifting out first a fine pair of fowls.

"There, mother! a farmer brought these into Mr

Spicer's shop as a present to him; and when he was gone, Mr. Spicer threw them into our basket, and said he had no use for them, and they wouldn't keep, so I had better take them home to you."

"Oh, Owen, I had been wishing for something like this so much. We haven't had such a luxury as this for months."

"No, indeed; and here is a pound of fresh butter and a dozen eggs; and here is a pound of figs, and one of raisins, and one of almonds; and here is a paper of ginger and one of spice; and here is a lump of suet and a bit of beef; and I do believe, mother, that he sent into his own kitchen and got the butter, and eggs, and the suet, and the beef while I was waiting; for you know he don't keep those things in his shop to sell. What do you think?"

"I think he is a good, kind, generous man! and I pray heaven to repay him."

"Heaven will do that! and here, mother, here is a little bottle of cider, and a bit of citron; and now we can have some mince pies and some gingerbread, can't we?"

"Yes, my darling, darling boy! thanks to that good man, you will have something nice for Christmas!" said Amy, as the tears sprang to her eyes.

"And, mother, he says that you mustn't fret about the bill, because he don't mind one bit. He says if you want anything more than you order, order it, and he will send it! that he is not afraid but what he will get his money sooner or later; and, above all, you are not to blot any more orders! Mother, what made him so particular about the blots?"

Amy had no secrets from her little son. So she answered—between smiles and tears:

"Oh, Owen, Owen, dear, I could not help it! But it was a large tear that fell upon the writing and blotted it! and in the depths of his good heart he knew where it came from, and he pitied me, and that is the whole mystery, my child!"

"Oh, mother, I hope it won't be long before I can do something for Mr. Spicer, just to show him, you know, how thankful I am!" said Owen, earnestly.

"Look ye here! We ain't none of us had much dinner to speak of. So if you'll be so good as to hand out that tea and that flour, I'll get supper ready," said Nancy.

Owen laughed, and complied with her request.

And Amy closed her eyes and offered up a mental thanksgiving for her unexpected comforts, and invoked the blessing of heaven upon the generous man whose kindness had made the widow's and the orphan's hearts to "sing for joy!"

(To be continued.)

COUNTY OF DURHAM BACHELORS' BALL.—The alce flowers once in a century, and the bachelors of Durham give a ball once in a generation. It is something over thirty years since the County Palatine grew exuberantly hospitable in a similar way, and now the Durham newspapers abound in details concerning a grand ball given by the bachelors of the county, which made the old city all alive on a recent occasion. It appears that such a scene of gaiety and festive enjoyment has not been witnessed in Durham for many years, all the diles of the rank and fashion of the neighbourhood being present and the brilliant gathering comprising between 250 and 300 members of the families of the nobility and gentry resident in and connected with the county.

GREAT MEN'S EYES.—"One might—one now and then can," says John Foster in his Diary, "throw one's whole soul through one's eyes in a single glance." Great men, especially great commanders, generally possess this remarkable power, which, like every other bodily or spiritual faculty, becomes all the stronger from its frequent use. In the eyes of certain persons there is something sublime, which beams and exacts reverence. This sublimity is the concealed power of raising themselves above others, which is not the wretched effect of constraint, but primitive essence. Each one finds himself obliged to submit to this secret power, without knowing why, as soon as he perceives that look, implanted by nature to inspire reverence, shining in the eye. Those who possess this natural sovereign essence rule as lords or lions among men by native privilege, with heart and tongue conquering all.

WARMTH AS AN ELEMENT OF HEALTH.—Dr. Smith touches incidentally in his report on the condition of the Cornish mines upon various points of practical importance. He notices the purifying effect of rain upon the air, of which there was a scarcity last year. Moisture with a high temperature is oppressive, but moisture with a lower temperature improves the air; and he holds that cold and moisture in such amounts as those in which they are found in Great Britain are capable of producing powerful constitutions, and that the watery districts of the kingdom present in many cases the most healthy spots. Still, in relation to venti-

lation, he notes that "chemical action, and, with it, the feelings, demand a certain amount of warmth first and above all things. No function can go on without it. You may live hours, days, or years in badly-ventilated places with more or less discomfort and danger, but a draught of cold air may kill like a sword. In railway carriages, and in houses also, the great instinct of man is first to be warm enough, and he is quite right. Such a universal instinct must not be sneered at."

THE HERO OF SEBASTOPOL.

CHAPTER I.

THE storming of Sebastopol was over, and the pale moon hung low in the sky, gilding the waves where the white-winged war ships of the allied powers had cast anchor, the fortresses which had been the pride and strength of the beleaguered town, and the little village beyond, where many a soldier lay dead. There they rested, horse and rider, amid the smouldering ruins of the cottages which had been fired by the foe; fragments of shells, broken carbines, and rifles that had dropped from hands which would never more grasp them; and groups of wounded and dying in almost every stage of suffering.

Now and then these last lifted their heavy eyes to the face of some comrade, searching for friends, perhaps a brother among the slain, and murmured half-audible prayers for peace and pardon, or fancied themselves again in the wild storm of battle, and victory still uncertain.

Somewhat apart from the rest of the wounded, there might have been seen a group more striking and picturesque than any on the field.

A young man, an English cavalry officer, was lying on the ground in an attitude which a painter might have loved to copy; his uniform soiled and crushed in the memorable charge of his brigade, his face scarred, and his shattered right arm resting on the noble steed that had fallen with him.

A body servant, who had followed him across the sea, and clung to him with devoted tenderness through all the chances and changes of war, knelt by him, sweeping back his wet hair with womanly solicitude, whilst his dog crouched near, as if he comprehended the whole meaning of the scene. At length the eyes of the wounded man unclosed, and turned earnestly to his faithful servant.

"Hugh," he said in a low voice, "you will go home alone!"

"Oh, my dear young master," replied Hugh Jacobs, "I hope not—I cannot give you up!"

"I fear your hopes are in vain, good Hugh—it is not probable I shall see old England again."

His companion did not speak, but a tear fell on the gashed brow, and the brown hand wandering over his master's hair, as it had in his boyhood, began to tremble.

"It will be hard for my parents to lose me," returned the young officer, "for I am the only child—the heir of the house of Armington; but I have been no coward, and brought no disgrace on their noble blood, and came at my country's call! Hugh, Hugh, you must comfort them when I am gone, and remain as true to them as you have been to me. But—but in this hour I think yearningly of one—one from whom I parted in doubt and anger. I thought I could forget her, but to no purpose have I tried to banish her image. Memories of her have haunted me on the march, by the watch-fire of the camp, and amid the din of battle, and they rise before me now. I see her just as she looked when I fell in love with her; with her hazel eyes, her scarlet lip and cheek, and cloud of chestnut hair. Oh! Hugh, never was there such a face as her's—all smiles, and dimples, and blushes; but I shall never gaze at it more. I wonder if she will weep when she reads the official report of the siege of Sebastopol, the terrible charge of our brigade, and the fall of her old lover, Reginald Armington?"

"If she has wronged you," rejoined Hugh, "if the thought of her causes you a pang to-night, she ought to weep, ought to repent—"

"She does repent, dear, dear Reginald," interposed a voice full of sweet pathos, and a little form sprang forward and knelt by the young officer.

Reginald Armington started, and a burning glow shot into his wan cheek.

"Florence!" he gasped. "Oh, Hugh, I am growing delirious, for it seems to me as if I had just heard her familiar tones, and she were indeed with me. Strange, strange, but I can see her as distinctly as when she used to come to meet me under the old thorn-tree."

"Dear, dear Reginald," murmured the lady, trembling from head to foot in her strong emotion, "it is no dream—I am here—Florence!"

It would be impossible to describe the change which passed over the young man's face; but his deep blue eyes kindled with sudden joy, and a smile played about his finely-chiselled mouth.

"What—what means this?" he faltered. "I left you in anger, and fearing you had never loved me; and God only knows what it cost me to think of resigning you for ever."

"And yet," replied Florence, softly, "I was not the heartless girl you thought me, Reginald. I am full of faults, for I have been petted at home, and flattered abroad too much for my own good. I vexed you, it is true, and then my pride forbade me to apologise, and thus misunderstanding commenced. Every morning I said to myself: 'Reginald will come to-day, and we shall be reconciled.' Every evening I listened for your footstep with an eagerness of which you did not dream, but in vain!"

She paused a moment, as if well-nigh overwhelmed by the bitter memories she had evoked, and gathering strength by a strong effort, continued:

"At length they told me there was no prospect of meeting you again, for your regiment had gone out to the Crimea."

"And did the tidings pain you, Florence?" asked the young officer, earnestly.

"Oh, Reginald, language cannot paint what I have suffered since that hour; for weeks after the tidings reached me I lay ill; but gradually I began to recover, inspired by a new purpose. I resolved to join a band of nurses, and follow you to the Crimea."

"My noble Florence," exclaimed the young officer, "how I have misconstrued you! When I fancied you false and cruel, you have been encountering a thousand dangers for my sake."

"Do not speak of that; far greater hardships cannot alone for the idle words, and the light, mocking laugh which drove you from me."

"You have atoned, Florence," and he drew her to him with all the old tenderness, adding, "the past is forgiven, dearest."

There was a deep silence, but finally Armington asked:

"Did your parents know you were coming?"

"No; when I mentioned the subject, they laughed at it as utterly chimerical, and I stole away to London in disguise, and set sail for the Crimea, while they believed me safe in England, and at my uncle's seat in Dorsetshire. The voyage was unusually short and prosperous, the captain told me, but it seemed as if I had been tossing on age on those restless waves which separated me from you. By day I paced the deck, straining my gaze over the waters—by night I walked the cabin, thinking of you."

"My brave, true Florence!" murmured Armington, and the girl went on:

"When I landed, I offered myself as nurse at headquarters, and was accepted; but wherever I was I kept on the watch, hoping to learn something of you. Often I heard you mentioned in the highest terms, but I dare not go to you and beg your forgiveness. Though I had travelled weary leagues by land and sea for that purpose, I feared you would scorn my love and scoff at my repentance!"

"There you were wrong," observed Armington. "I, too, was yearning to be reconciled to you; but how did you chance to be here this evening? Did you come here as a nurse to lend your aid to the wounded, or simply to find me?"

"An impulse I could not resist drove me to a spot where I could watch the fortunes of the battle, and for hours I have been on the look-out, Reginald."

"And you saw the storming of the town?"

"Yes, and you, dear, dear Reginald, with your steadfast eye and firm lip, cheering your men to the onset. When you fell, I faltered, and I must have lain there some time, for when I awoke to consciousness the moon was rising above the scene of the battle. It was with difficulty that I arose, and made my way amid the wounded and the dead, searching for you. Finally, I heard your voice, and drew nearer, and listened to your conversation with Hugh."

"God guided you to me, Florence!" exclaimed the young officer. "I can now die in peace."

"Oh, Reginald, Reginald," sobbed the lady, "tell me once more that you forgive me."

"I do forgive you, dearest, best beloved! I have kept your picture, Florence, through all, and when my men bury me, let this be buried with me!"

As he spoke, he drew forth a small locket of the finest gold, set with pearls, and emblazoned with the interlinked initials, F. R.

The next instant he fell back unconscious, and Florence sank down beside him in another death-like swoon.

"My dear, young master—poor, poor Florence!" cried Hugh Jacobs, "she will wake again; but he never—"

He stopped, and gazing around him, resumed: "What is to be done? I will take Miss Florence to the hospital. I do not like to leave my master, but it is the best I can do. When she is provided for, I will come and remove him." Flinging a military cloak over Armington, he lifted

the senseless girl and bore her away to the hospital, where he consigned her to a surgeon.

More than an hour passed ere he went back to the spot where he had left his master. To his grief and surprise, both the young officer and his faithful steed were missing, and only the dead steed remained.

"Where—where can my master be?" mourned Jacobs, and he wandered to and fro, searching in every direction for Colonel Armington.

But all his efforts proved fruitless, and as the good serving-man was trying to solve the mystery, he chanced to see a horseman careering along; it was Gerald Armington, a distant relative of his master, and a soldier of fortune, who had fought unscathed through the siege of Sebastopol.

"No, there!" cried Hugh, waving his hand. "I would like a moment's speech with you."

The tall dragoon drew rein at his side, and bent from his saddle, exclaiming:

"What do you wish, Hugh? Can I be of any service to you?"

"Why, sir, I hope you can, for the strangest thing has happened to my master; and he proceeded to relate the circumstances with which our readers are already familiar, adding:

"Have you seen Colonel Armington since I left him?"

"No; but Lord Raglan has just been here, and many of the officers have been removed to the out-buildings yonder. Perhaps my cousin is there, and I will go with you, and look for him."

"Thank you," replied Jacobs, and the dragoon dismounted and walked on with the serving-man.

With hope and fear struggling for the mastery, Jacobs resumed his search; but when it proved fruitless Gerald Armington started in another direction, and he turned to Lord Raglan and told his simple story, begging to know if he could relieve his suspense.

"No," rejoined his lordship, "I have seen nothing of him since I came back to have our dead and wounded properly cared for, but I will give you all the assistance in my power. Armington was a brave officer, and his death will be a great loss to the allied army."

"Yes, yes, my lord, but the blow will fall heavier on his father and mother—God pity them!—and the young lady who followed him from England, and fainted when he sank back dead. Still it would be a comfort to them if his body could be sent home, and they know the place of his rest."

"Indeed it would," said Lord Raglan, "and I trust this consolation may be theirs."

Several who had overheard the conversation, now volunteered to join in the search for Reginald Armington, but their efforts were alike unavailing. When they met at the rendezvous where they had agreed to meet, the faithful servant's heart sank at the tidings they brought, and Gerald Armington said, gravely:

"I am forced to the belief that Reginald has been killed by Russian soldiers, who have been permitted to remove and bury their own dead."

"Heaven help him!" cried Hugh. "If I had not left him, this would not have happened, and I shall never, never forgive myself."

"I am sure you have no cause for reproach," observed Gerald Armington. "I will break the news to his parents, and tell them how faithfully you clung to him through all. Henceforth you can act in the same capacity to me, for servants like you are rare."

Hugh Jacobs was too much moved to speak, but with an overpowering sense of loss and loneliness, walked away to bivouac with his new master on the field won by that terrible strife.

CHAPTER II.

The next morning dawned bright and clear over sea and shore, and at an early hour Gerald Armington and Hugh were astir. Suddenly a light footfall was heard approaching, and Florence Lester stood before them with her grey serge robe, her pale face, and the long, dark veil gathered about it. She looked like a grey nun, while her large, sorrowful eyes and her half-parted lips gave her a still more touching aspect.

"Miss Lester!" exclaimed Armington, "this is no place for you!"

"Do not rebuke me—I have come to gaze at him once more."

"Oh, Miss Lester!" cried Hugh, "he is not here."

"What! you have not dared to bury him without permitting me to take a farewell look?" rejoined the girl.

Hugh Jacobs turned to the stately dragoon, and muttered:

"Tell her, sir, for I dare not."

"It is, perhaps, painful to be the bearer of unwelcome tidings," began Armington, "but when Jacobs came back to the spot where he had left his master, after he had borne you away, my cousin's body

was missing, and though we have made the most thorough search, we can find no trace of him."

"Strange, strange!" exclaimed Florence, her lips quivering as she spoke. "Where can he be?"

"I am forced to the conclusion that he has been buried with some Russian soldiers; for they requested, and were allowed, to bury their own dead; and, if so, we must give up all hope of recovering his body."

A sharp cry broke from Florence, and she staggered, and would have fallen had it not been for the support of Gerald Armington's arm.

"Poor lady!" murmured Hugh, dashing a tear from his sun-bronzed cheek; "it is hard for her; and how it would stir my young master's heart if he could see her grief!"

With those words Hugh Jacob seated himself, and watched the dragoon as, with Florence leaning heavily upon his arm, he moved through the little village, and to the building in the beleaguered town, which the allies had appropriated to the uses of a hospital. With knightly courtesy Armington assisted the girl to ascend the broad staircase, and consigned her to the nurses, who were busy with the wounded brought in by their compassionate comrades.

"Let her have the best of care," he said, as he placed her on a low couch; "for if she should die far away from old England it would break more than one heart."

His language had a double meaning; but Florence only thought of the parents from whom she had fled to follow the lost Reginald to the Crimea, and did not dream of the hopes springing up in the inmost recesses of his soul.

Time rolled on, and a severe wound received from a Russian scout while on guard, disabled Gerald Armington from active service, and while he was lying in the hospital, he framed his plans for future action. A letter from England, written by his uncle's attorney, apprised him that he had suddenly died; and he was now the sole heir of the house of Armington. As soon as practicable he sailed for his native land, with Florence Lester under his protection, and Hugh Jacobs as his servant.

It was in June that the voyagers reached England, and the hedge-rows were white with bloom, the meadows green with the fresh grass, and the grand old elm-trees of the park interlaced overhead, forming a canopy of verdure. Swans sailed in stately grace on the blue lakes, doves and pigeons murmured in the sunshine, which fell warm on the sloping roof, and peacocks trailed their gorgeous plumage like a queen's robes along the terraces. Reginald Armington's home had never been fairer than on that summer's day when the carriage that bore our travellers wound slowly through the grounds; but Florence Lester's sobe and the grave face of Hugh Jacobs, as well as the assumed solemnity of the new heir, told of the double shadow that had fallen on the old homestead.

At length the equipage stopped, the hall door swung open, and Armington and Florence were ushered into the drawing-room. A pale, sad woman, bearing a strong resemblance to the fallen Reginald, and clad in deep mourning, advanced to meet them. She greeted the new heir politely, but, at sight of the girl, gasped, "Oh, Florence, I love you for his sake!" and gathered her in her arms.

Gerald Armington retired, and the two sat down side by side, and talked tearfully of the storming of Sebastopol, the fall of Reginald in the thickest of the fight, and the mysterious disappearance of his body. Then they visited the picture-gallery, and gazed with yearning tenderness at the three portraits of the loved and lost, taken in boyhood, youth, and manhood. They lingered long in the suite of rooms which had been his, and wandered to all the haunts he had loved. The day subsequent Mr. Lester arrived at Armington Hall, and his daughter left the place, endeared to her by so many associations, for her own home. Her father, at meeting, had called her a madcap girl, and her mother, who was a fashionable woman, feared that it would ruin her daughter's prospects of marrying eligibly for any gentleman to know of what she deemed her wild escape to the Crimea.

To confess the truth, Mr. and Mrs. Lester had never countenanced her penchant for Reginald Armington, as her beauty, grace, and wit had won her the homage of two or three noblemen during her first London seasons, and they looked higher than the untitled heir of the ancient house of Armington, brave, and true, and noble as he was.

They advised her to go into society, and dance, and sing, and trifle as in other days; but Florence still kept her faith to the lost Reginald.

Months dragged by, and, to her extreme regret, her father invited a gay party to spend the shooting season with him. Among them came Gerald Armington, and every nerve thrilled at the fearful memories his presence roused. Nothing could have been more delicate than his attentions to her, and at last she awoke to a full knowledge of his purposes.

They stood hard by the spot where she had parted

with Reginald Armington, when their misunderstanding began; the woods beyond were all aflame, and the autumn sunset beamed like an altar-fire in the west, encircling her fair, young head with a halo.

"Florence," exclaimed her companion, "you look like some divinity this evening; you cannot wonder if I kneel and worship!" and he knelt at her feet and went on: "It is no light love which prompts my homage; for years you have been the star of my dreams, and I would give worlds if I could gain a return!"

The lady started, and her cheek flushed, and tears gathered in her brown eyes, as she replied:

"Have you so soon forgotten your cousin, Mr. Armington?"

"No, oh, no; neither do I expect you to forget him; but why not transfer the love you bore him to me?"

"Gerald Armington, your language proves that you do not understand the depths of a woman's heart. Be my life longer or shorter, I shall be true to your cousin's memory!"

"Dear, dear Florence, you are, like most girls, romantic; but I shall still hope that time will lessen your grief, and I have your father's sanction to my suit."

They were now interrupted, and the subject was not resumed till hours later, when Mr. Lester summoned her to a private conference.

"My child," he said, "Mr. Gerald Armington has begged leave to pay you his addresses, and you must decide to accept him."

"Accept him, sir?—I thought you once looked above an alliance with the house of Armington."

"Yes, I did; but since your return from the Crimea, you may think yourself well off to secure a country squire."

The poor girl pleaded with all her eloquence that she might not thus be sacrificed, but her father was firm, and Gerald Armington an accomplished tactician, and ere his visit was over she was his betrothed bride.

The family soon went to London to spend the winter, and Florence was dreading looking forward to the round of gaieties in which her mother was wont to participate, and the wedding, that afforded subjects for endless talk.

It was a chill evening in January, when the sky arched sullen and wasteful above the earth, and the winds presaged a storm, that she sat alone by the fire-side. Suddenly the bell rang, and the porter admitted a tall and stately man, muffled in a military cloak.

"You do not recognize me, Miss Lester," he exclaimed, "and I shall be obliged to introduce myself; but you and I have met before, and leagues away from England. I am one of Lord Raglan's staff, and the bearer of a despatch from him—not to her Majesty alone, but to you." And he held out a letter.

The girl eagerly grasped it, and motioning the officer to a seat, she unfolded it, and read as follows:

"DEAR MISS LESTER,—I have a joyful surprise for you, and am at last able to send home to you—not the dead, but the living Reginald Armington. He is not strong enough to take to the field again, and I commend him to your kind care."

"I am, yours faithfully,

"RAGLAN."

"What!" cried Florence. "Is Reginald Armington still living?"

"Yes, Miss Lester. It seems his cousin had played a false part toward him and you. Poor and unknown, he envied his cousin his fortune, his rank in the army, and the lady whose love he had won. He had watched your interview with Colonel Armington, and when his servant left him to bear you away, he bribed two French soldiers to assist in concealing the body, as a surgeon who had passed and examined the wounds of the fallen officer had declared he might recover. They kept the colonel carefully concealed, and when he began to grow convalescent and the new heir sailed for England, he formed a plan to have him left where he could be taken prisoner by the Russians. The rogue's accomplices have since exposed him, and restored Colonel Armington to the allied camp. Here he is, and leaving him to explain more satisfactorily than I can, I withdraw."

As he spoke, Florence sprang forward to welcome the lost Reginald, and the next moment she was gathered to his heart.

An item in the morning papers announced the return of Reginald Armington and the treachery of the cousin, who had usurped his home, and even sought the hand of his promised bride. Gerald Armington read it over his coffee and muffled, and with an oath, quitted the table. Too much chagrined and disappointed to meet his former friends, he left the country, and never again trod English soil; his fate being as mysterious as the disappearance of his cousin after that memorable siege.

Bonfires were kindled, bells rung, and triumphal arches built by the delighted peasantry when Reginald

Armington came to take possession of his ancestral home; his wedding at the village church was a brilliant one, and never had a happier pair walked down the aisle than Florence and the hero of Sebastopol.

C. F. G.

SCIENCE.

INVENTION FOR SHARPENING PINS.—M. Cauderay, an engineer of Lausanne, has applied the galvanic battery to the sharpening of needles and pins by connecting a bundle of wires with the negative pole in the most ingenious manner. The process is said to be cheaper than the present method, which is also very injurious to the health of the workpeople, in consequence of the fine metallic dust disengaged.

AN EXPERIMENT WITH IRON PLATING ON SHIPS.—The French ironclad frigate *Invisible* has just been taken into the dry dock at Castignean, which has afforded an opportunity of judging of the efficacy of the system applied to that vessel for preserving her iron plates. A band of zinc, which, by isolating the electric currents, guarantees the plates from that green coating which causes injury, has transformed the nature of that vegetation, and instead of a casing of marine herbs, there was found attached to the frigate's bottom a fine collection of corals.

In boring for oil near Chicago, they have struck the greatest flow of water of which there is any public record. This well is of considerable diameter, and seven hundred and eight feet deep. It is now discharging 400 gallons per minute, 24,000 per hour, and 576,000 per day. The water is clear as crystal, perfectly sweet and pure, and remarkably free from taints of sulphur and other disagreeable substances. The well of Grenelle, in France, discharges half a million gallons per day, but the water is warm (85° Fah.) and can only be used for heating the hospitals and for mechanical purposes. This water can be used for any purpose, and has power enough to carry it in pipes one hundred feet above the surface.

THE PLANTS AND ANIMALS OF THE PETROLEUM ROCKS.—Vegetables and animals that lived in the latter part of the Devonian age of the world, an age which we may now emphatically call the oil age, preceding the coal age, we think to be as perfect as can now be made out. It shows the large amount of material which then existed for the generation of petroleum, and when we remember that it is only the few species of the many that are petrified, and thus preserved—petrification being the exception and decay the general rule—we are surprised at the number of genera and species. The individuals are found by myriads, many feet of strata being filled with them. Table of Upper Devonian fauna and flora:—Genera: Plants, 42; corals, 16; bryozoa, 6; echinoderms, 25; molluscs, 106; crustacea, 8; fish, 8; reptiles, 1. Species: Plants, 100; corals, 29; bryozoa, 10; echinoderms, 71; molluscs, 479; crustacea, 31; fish, 16; reptiles, 1. Of the plants, 3 genera and 5 species were seaweeds; the rest were land plants.

EXTRAORDINARY DISCOVERIES OF PETROLEUM IN CALIFORNIA.

The occurrence of fluid inflammable substances upon the coast of Santa Barbara, in Southern California, has been known since 1792; but little importance has been attached to it until very recently, when the development of the oil region of Pennsylvania has shown the immense value of the great natural repositories of petroleum, and directed attention to other localities in which it is found. One of the most extraordinary of these repositories is that near the coast of California, about three hundred and twenty miles south from San Francisco, where the usual indications of petroleum were so great that parties, on learning the fact, at once proceeded to make explorations.

The importance of these indications of a great petroleum region was not appreciated by the early explorers and settlers in California. The indications of the vast quantities of petroleum on the surface have been regarded by the owners of the estates as a detriment to their property, inasmuch as they caused a loss of their live stock, in which the value of their ranches chiefly consisted, by the animals becoming drowned in the great pools of petroleum. These exudations have the effect of rendering barren tracts of land of a mile square, more or less, in the midst of a fine agricultural district.

The first attempt to apply this petroleum to useful purposes was made about two years since by Mr. Gilbert, who, understanding its nature, and finding it in abundance issuing from many springs upon the property, put up for himself a refinery upon a small scale. He drew the crude oil chiefly from one of the great wells, from which he obtained 400 barrels, without apparently diminishing the supply. In the summer of 1864 Prof. Silliman examined this locality, and in

a letter, dated at Buenaventura, Santa Barbara County, July 2, 1864, he writes:

"The property covers an area of 18,000 acres in one body, on which are, at present, at least twenty natural oil wells, some of them of the largest size. The oil is struggling to the surface at every available point, and is running away down the rivers for miles and miles. Artesian wells will be fruitful along a double line of thirteen miles, say, for at least twenty-five miles in linear extent. The ranch is an old Spanish grant of four leagues of land, lately confirmed, and of perfect title. It has, as I said, about 18,000 acres in it of the finest land, watered by four rivers, and measuring in a right line in all near thirteen miles. As a ranch, it is a splendid estate, but its value is its almost fabulous wealth in the best of oil."

RAILWAYS IN NEW SOUTH WALES.—Tenders have been called for the Great Southern Extension, which will carry the railway into the town of Goulburn. The length of the line will be twenty-six miles twenty-seven chains, and it is to be let in one contract. There will be a number of heavy cuttings, but the most formidable works will be the bridges across the numerous rivers and creeks. Close to Goulburn there is to be a tubular girder bridge over the Mulwaree Ponds, with twelve openings of 60 feet. It is not decided whether the piers are to be of stone or brick; prices for both kinds of work are to be given, and that which is found the most economical will be adopted. The line will twice cross the Wollondilly River; the bridge at the first crossing will have seven openings of 60ft., and one of 130ft.; that at the second crossing will have six openings of 60ft., and one of 130ft. At Barber's Creek there will be a bridge with five openings of 60ft.; that at Box's Creek will have two openings of 60ft. Excepting that at the Mulwaree Ponds, all of these bridges will have single-web iron girders; the piers to be of stone or brick, as may be found most economical. Over several other creeks there will be large viaducts, mostly of timber. The ballasting and the permanent way will be included in the contract, for the performance of which three years will be given.

THE MANUFACTURE OF LUCIFERS.

There are two reasons why it is very desirable that the matches we at present use should be superseded by others having no phosphorus in their composition. In the first place nearly all the processes involved in the manufacture of our present lucifers are deplorably deleterious to the workmen—they are, perhaps, the only industrial processes more detrimental to health than needle-grinding—the inhalation of the vapour of phosphorus bringing on that terrible disease of the jaw-bones which is known as *phosphorosis*. In the second place, while phosphorus is one of the most important elements of the food of those plants which furnish mankind with the staff of life, it is an element of which the supply is so limited that as little of it as possible should be diverted from agricultural use; and at present many thousands of tons of bones, which ought to go on our fields, are consumed in the preparation of free phosphorus for the manufacture of matches. The inventor of a match which should be as cheap and convenient as those at present in use, and should yet contain no phosphorus, would thus be a great public benefactor, and we are therefore very glad to see that some of the German chemists are making earnest endeavours in this direction.

Dr. Hierpe proposes to make the heads of matches of a mixture of from four to six parts of chlorate of potash with two parts each of bichromate of potash and oxide of iron or lead, and three parts of strong glue. Matches so made require a special igniting surface, for which Dr. Hierpe employs a mixture of twenty parts of sulphide of antimony, with two to four parts of bichromate of potash, four to six parts of oxide of either iron, lead, or manganese, two parts of glass powder, and two to three parts of strong glue or gum. Another German chemist, Dr. H. Poltzer, proposes to make match heads of a mixture of chlorate of potash with a peculiar salt, which he describes as a compound of hyposulphurous acid with soda, ammonia, and oxide and sub-oxide of copper. Match heads so made ignite when rubbed on any rough surface, even more readily than our present lucifers. This, indeed, is perhaps the chief objection to Dr. Poltzer's matches, since they would be still more liable to unintentional ignition than the matches at present in use. Matches made on Dr. Hierpe's plan would, on the contrary, be much less so.

PHOTOGRAPHIC MAPS.—A map of the town of Grenobles and its environs, embracing twenty square kilometres, has been produced with the aid of the camera in a very short space of time. The immediate object in view is the obtaining correct topographical profiles for military purposes, and, consequently, the means of placing an attacking force comparatively out of the reach of danger, but maps showing the undulations of the land are of too evident utility to require

any special application to illustrate their value. The map in question is made to a scale of one in five thousand, and was entirely produced in Paris from twenty-nine photographic views taken from eighteen different points by Captain Javary. The stations selected were partly on one side of the river Isère, and partly on the other, and it is believed that not a single accident of the outline has been missed. The extreme elevation of the ground on the right bank of the river is more than three thousand feet. The shortest distance at which a view was taken was about a thousand yards, the greater part were at fifteen hundred yards, and some few as distant as four thousand five hundred. It is stated, on the authority of M. Lonsedet, with whom the plan originated, that fitting of the levels is such as could not have been produced by any other known method of expeditious military reconnaissance. The views were taken by two lenses of different focal lengths, namely, one of 50 centimetres, the other of 27. The former was employed for tolerably large representations and objects at a distance, or where it was found necessary to take special notice of details, and the other, which took in a field of 60 deg. for the shorter distances. The photographic operations only occupied about sixty hours, and the subsequent preparation of the map two months.

NATURE OF POLARISED LIGHT.

In his "Dictionary of Chemistry," Dr. Watts makes the following observations on the nature of polarised light:—"The existence of rays having different properties on different sides was regarded by Newton as a decisive objection against the wave-theory of light, on the ground that pressures or movements excited by a luminous body in an elastic medium ought to be equal in all directions; and Huyghens was obliged to admit his inability to account for the existence of polarised rays on the undulatory theory as then understood."

The reason of this apparent inability of the wave-theory to explain the phenomenon of polarisation was that, at the time of which we are speaking, the vibratory movements of the ether were supposed to take place wholly in the direction of propagation of the waves, and on that hypothesis it is impossible to conceive of rays of light, any more than rays of sound, possessing different properties on different sides. But later experimental researches, and the investigation of the subject on the principles of analytical mechanics, have shown that the vibrations of the luminiferous ether take place in planes tangential to the wave-surface, or transversely to the direction of the ray.

From this point of view, the difference between ordinary and polarised light is easily explained. An ordinary or natural ray is one in which the vibrations take place in all directions successively in the plane of the wave; and a polarised ray is one in which the vibrations, still tangential to the wave-surface, are confined to one plane. Suppose, for example, the direction of the ray to be vertical, or that of the wave-surface horizontal; then, if the ray be polarised, the direction of vibration of all the particles will be either north and south, or east and west, or in some one intermediate azimuth; and if it be unpolarised, the vibrations will take place in all these directions successively.

This view of the nature of polarised light is established by the experiments of Fresnel and Arago on the interference of polarised rays, the general result of which is that two rays whose planes of polarisation are parallel to one another interfere just like unpolarised rays; but two rays whose planes of polarisation are perpendicular to one another do not exhibit any phenomena of interference, whatever may be their difference of phase. These results are easily conceivable if the vibrations are transverse to the direction of the ray; for if the vibrations of the two rays take place in directions parallel to each other, the resultant will be equal to the sum or difference of their individual movements, and will be reduced to zero, that is to say, the rays will destroy each other, when their phases are exactly opposite; but if their vibrations are performed in planes inclined to one another at any angle, there will be, at every point, a finite resultant, determined in magnitude and position by the rules of the parallelogram of velocities, and never becoming equal to nothing. Hence, two rays whose planes of polarisation are not parallel can never interfere so as to produce complete darkness; and if their planes are at right angles to one another, they cannot interfere at all. If, on the other hand, the vibrations of the ether take place in the direction of the ray, it is impossible to conceive any conditions which would prevent them from interfering with one another, and producing darkness when they meet one another under a certain difference of phase.

CAN INDICATOR.—The French authorities have for a long time occupied themselves with plans for checking the distance as well as the time of public vehicles; the old system of *courses*, single journeys within the limits of the city, has ceased to be fairly applicable

since the limits of Paris were extended to the fortifications; the uniform charge for a ride of twenty minutes (for there is a minimum rate for a journey of not more than a quarter of an hour) and for one of an hour, is clearly unjust both to the proprietors of vehicles and to the public, and the circumstances of the case demand a readjustment of the system. The municipal authorities of Paris have, therefore, urged the company to which the public carriages belong to use its utmost endeavours to find a means by which payment by distance may be regulated. Many attempts have been made without success, but a metre, invented by M. Meulay and Verdie, seems to hold out some promise, and three have been placed in cabs belonging to the company. This instrument has two faces, which indicate, first, the distance passed over; secondly, the time occupied in so doing; and thirdly, the stoppages, which are added to the distances at the rate of eight kilometres, rather less than five miles, an hour. Should this new metre be found to answer in practice, there will be no difficulty between the hirer and the driver, as the former may engage a carriage either by time or distance. But the apparatus attempts more than this; it contains a card, on which it marks all the courses made during the day, the time employed, and the number of kilometres paid for by the public, and consequently the sum which the driver has received. It is declared that all this has been accomplished, and, if so, there is no question that the application of the apparatus will soon become general, but unless the action of the metre is arrested when the carriage is moving, though unoccupied, the driver would stand charged with the distances passed over from and to the stations and the places where he takes up and puts down his fares. This cannot, however, have been overlooked, and it is to be hoped, for the sake of all concerned, that the problem may have been solved.

CURIOUS DISCOVERY.—A curious discovery was brought under the notice of the public at the Polytechnic Institution recently. Professor Pepper prophesies that medical results of the highest importance will follow from it. But however this may be, there can be no doubt that it will receive the attention of the faculty of medicine, and become the subject of experiment in our hospitals and infirmaries. It occurred to a scientific gentleman to examine with the microscope the impressions left on a piece of glass by the breathings of a number of persons; he found that different figures or impressions were made by different breaths. He repeated the experiment, and with similar results. This induced him to make drawings of the impressions, which drawings he submitted to Professor Pepper; and the professor, ever enthusiastic in the course of scientific discovery, has had the drawings copied upon glass, and now exhibits them, through the medium of the magic lantern, to crowds at the Polytechnic. They are extremely interesting in a physiological point of view, and very curious as a matter of casuistry observation. One of them presents the appearance of a view in a kaleidoscope. On the magnified disc presented to the spectators there appear an almost infinite variety of shapes and combinations—some like daggers, others resembling stars, others in flower-like form, &c. These represent the breathings of different individuals. Professor Pepper is of opinion that in cases of phthisis (consumption) and other pulmonary complaints, observations on the character of the forms in which the breath is deposited on a glass or other surface after emission from the lungs will be most valuable. Certainly, it would be an extraordinary discovery that a diagnosis on the state of one's lungs might be given from a microscopical observation of the particular form assumed by the breath, as deposited on a sheet of glass on emission from the mouth of the patient.

THE GREAT WATER-BEETLE.

The great water-beetle is, both in its larval and imago state, one of the most voracious insects in existence. If kept in an aquarium, his predatory disposition soon manifests itself. Woe betide the unfortunate stickleback or newt that is once caught and held by the strong mandibles of this fresh-water tyrant. It little matters what is the size of the victim attacked. It has been seen to rush upon a full-grown smooth newt, and no twistings and writhings of his flesh was of any avail. Burmeister has recorded of a kindred genus (*Cyberus*) that it devoured in the short space of forty hours two frogs, and that, so rapid was the digestive process, that he was unable to find any remains in the intestinal canal, upon his dissecting the beetle shortly afterwards.

The voracious habits of the larva of dytids are as great as they are in the perfect insect; but owing to the greater strength of the mandibles, and more fully developed muscular system of the beetle, the insect is a more formidable enemy to the other inhabitants of the water than of the larva.

The dytids, however, though naturally very voracious, are able to live some weeks without food. The male is recognized by his smooth elytra; the female has furrowed elytra and a rough thorax. The male, moreover, is readily distinguished by the form of his fore feet, the two interior tarsi of which are expanded into a circular cavity on the under side, covered with a number of suckers.

The wing covers in both sexes are provided internally with a pair of small membranes nearly circular, and ciliated at the margins, which some writers suppose are instrumental in producing the humming sounds which they occasionally make. The wings are large, and at their anterior parts transversely folded beneath the elytra. These insects have been observed to leave the water and take to flight.

In the warm months the water-beetle may be seen swimming in a pond or ditch, every now and then rising to the surface, and protruding the tail portion of the body, so as to admit the air through the opening elytra to the spiracles. These extremely beautiful structures are eighteen in number, and are in connection with a system of tracheal tubes, which ramify in all directions through the whole system, forming the respiratory apparatus.

The surface of the back underneath the wings is clothed with glossy brown hairs, which, by the repulsion of the water, enables the admitted air to gain free access to the spiracles. The last pair of legs are fringed with long hairs, forming an oar-like apparatus, by means of which the beetle is enabled to move about with great swiftness in the water. It is a very interesting sight to see the ease and rapidity with which a large water-beetle rows himself out of harm's reach when disturbed as he lies at the surface of the water.

A FELLOW, recently tried on a charge of stealing a certain quantity of coffee, was acquitted because it was made out that it was only chicory and peas.

THE jewellers are now doing a considerable trade in Brazilian beetles by setting them in gold or silver to form bracelets, necklets, brooches, &c. The beetles chiefly used are found in immense numbers at Bahia, and they are brought to England in the Brazilian mail packets. The beetles are of small size, and their colours are green and gold. They are caught in nets to prevent their mutilation, and are sold at about 1s. each in this country.

TITLE OF MAJESTY.—We believe Henry VIII. was the first English sovereign who was styled "His Majesty." The titles of English sovereigns have undergone many changes: Henry IV. was "His Grace;" Henry VI., "His Excellent Grace;" Edward IV., "High and Mighty Prince;" Henry VII., "His Grace," and "His Highness;" Henry VIII., first "His Highness," and then "His Majesty." "His Sacred Majesty" was the title assumed by subsequent sovereigns, which was afterwards changed to "Most Excellent Majesty."

THE SWORD MAKER OF TOLEDO.

CHAPTER XI.

Are you, then, wounded? Oh, be friends with me?
You hold your game for won already? Do not
Triumph too soon!

German Play.

"I do" was the savage reply. "He loves this same Syria, the little Jewess, and because I spoke to her in the streets the other day, he cut me up in the shoulder dreadfully. But I'll be even with him yet."

"You must have had some satisfaction last night," observed the necromancer, softly. "To have robbed him of his start in life must be worth something."

"It was. I see by your looks that you bear him no good will. I wanted to wring his neck, but he escaped my clutches—taking girl and all. I came by his shop this afternoon, and saw that it had been restored to order, and that he had a dozen weapons on exhibition which he managed to save. I'm not done with the fellow yet," he added, grimly.

"Has the duke ever seen him?" asked the magician, thoughtfully, yet eagerly.

"Yes, once, and he has raved about him ever since. The fellow made a strange impression upon him. He's wished that he was his son—but how pale you are, senor! What is the matter with you?"

"Nothing, my dear count—nothing but a sudden twinge. Pray go on."

But the count was silent. Perhaps the extraordinary interest taken in his affairs by such a stranger as Senor Coronado appealed to his sense of caution; but whatever the reason, he remained obstinately silent.

"You need not be afraid to tell me anything," observed Coronado, quietly. "All this was known to me before. I have great powers at my command

and have it in my power to forward any or all of your designs. I am your friend, too, if you wish it."

"I do," said Garcia, seeing in his companion a kindred spirit. "I am strangely attracted towards you—why, I know not. I never took such a sudden fancy to a stranger before."

The magician smiled strangely.

"And then, too, you have proved your friendship in writing me that note about Syria, so I'll finish telling you what I began. My father wished I would copy this sword-maker, and confessed to being strangely interested in him. He heard this morning that I had a hand in last night's affair, and was dreadfully angered against me. He threatens to disinherit me for it."

"He does?" said the magician, hoarsely.

"Yes, and as he always keeps his word, I fear I am already a beggar—or somewhere near it!" and a dark frown knitted his brows. "I wish I had your secret—"

"You shall have it! I will prepare it for you!" replied Coronado. "You can trust me, but it is hardly time to use it. Have faith in me. And now, shall we be friends?"

Garcia clasped his hand.

"And now about Syria," he asked. "Where is she?"

"Here—in this very house! She came here this morning." And Coronado related how he had found her and induced her to enter his dwelling. "Juan Montes came here this afternoon to consult with me in regard to her fate, but I sent him away without giving him any satisfaction."

"Thanks!" cried Garcia, pressing his hand.

"I suppose you will want to take charge of her, count? What will you do with her?"

"I own a little house in the city," replied the chamberlain, "and I should take her there. It is now in charge of a housekeeper, who would guard the maiden zealously. Suppose you assist me to remove her to-night?"

After a little further conversation this arrangement was agreed upon, and Coronado said:

"Syria expects to go in search of her father to-night, and I promised to go with her. Now, if we could only manage to convey her to your house, without her suspecting where she's going, it would be best. Couldn't you go on ahead as a guide, without her seeing you?"

The count assented; they conversed a few moments, and then the magician hastened to Syria.

Syria had awakened from her sleep, smoothed out her glossy hair, unlocked her door, and was seated in her chair when the magician entered.

"You look better!" was his comment, as his eyes lingered on her sweet face. "I see that you have slept."

"It is night," returned Syria, unheeding his compliment, "and I must hasten in search of my father. I will not trouble you to attend me, senor. After all your kindness to me, it would not be right for me to bring you into trouble by being seen with you in the streets."

She arose, and put on her street garments with nervous haste.

"Syria!" said the magician, in a tone of assumed sympathy. "I have news of Ben Israel!"

"News of him—of my dear, dear father?" cried the girl, springing to his side with eyes all luminous with excitement. "What of him—where is he?"

"I told you, my dear child, how I searched for him everywhere this morning, but to no avail. I forgot to add that I offered large rewards for any information concerning him. In compliance with that offer, a man has just come here to inform me that Ben Israel is sheltered in a house at a little distance from mine. He was injured a little, though not seriously, in the tumult of last evening, and needs your loving care and attention—"

"Let us hasten to him!" exclaimed Syria. "Oh, take me to him now, Senor Coronado. Every moment is an hour until I see him!"

"I will but just change my garments," returned the necromancer, biting his lips to hide a well-pleased smile. "Have a minute's patience."

He retired from the room, and was absent about fifteen minutes, that dragged like hours to the eager and impatient daughter.

"My father alive!" she murmured, in tones of heartfelt joy. "Oh, thank God!"

When Coronado returned, her eyes shone through her tears, and she sprang to meet him.

"How you must love your father!" said Coronado, with a sigh. "Come, pretty one, I am eager to behold the parent of such a daughter."

With a parting injunction to his cat, the magician led Syria from the house into the street.

The night was beautiful with star-light; lights flashed through latticed windows upon them as they passed along, and merry laughter rang out from happy

homes; occasionally they met a pedestrian, or a party of revellers; but Syria saw and heard nothing of these things. She did not note, as her companion did, the figure of Count Garcia proceeding at a little distance ahead of them, leading the way.

And Count Garcia, the magician, and the maiden were alike unaware that a bent and wrinkled old woman, with ferret-like eyes, was silently stealing in their footsteps.

"How is my father injured?" asked Syria, at length breaking the silence into which she and her companion had fallen.

"Ah! His arm is broken," returned Coronado, not removing his gaze from the count's figure. "He is a little feverish too. But we are almost there."

The magician had seen his guide disappear within a deserted-looking dwelling, and thither he led the maiden.

The door was slightly ajar, and the couple passed within the hall a moment undecided to which room to proceed, when the old woman who had followed them, peered in through the door, muttering inaudibly: "Tis he! I am not mistaken! I must keep my eyes upon him, for he is planning mischief!"

At this moment a light flashed up in an inner room, and Coronado said:

"Ah, Syria, this way. I had momentarily forgotten the man's directions."

They proceeded to the lighted room, which they entered, finding it deserted.

It was a neat apartment, but with no signs of occupation, and the maiden exclaimed:

"Why, senior, my father is not here! Are you not mistaken in the house? How singular—"

She paused, as a door opposite to the one by which they had entered was opened, and Count Garcia, flushed with his triumph, appeared.

"Corvut Garcia!" exclaimed the girl, in alarm, springing to the side of the magician for safety. "Oh, senior, let us go! My father is not here!"

"No, Syria," said the count, smoothly, "your father is not here! He is at this moment enjoying the hospitality of Rabbi Benjamin, as I have learned—"

Syria uttered a cry of surprise and fear, and looked up into Coronado's face with an expression of trusting confidence, saying:

"You said he was here, senior! Have you mistaken the house?"

"I fear I have," was the hypocritical reply. "You know this count, then?"

"Oh! yes. Take me away. Let us go to the rabbi's."

She clung to his arm, endeavouring to move him towards the door.

"I cannot," returned Coronado, coolly. "I have an engagement for this evening, and since you are so well acquainted with Count Garcia, I shall not hesitate to leave you to his care. Good evening, count. Good evening, Syria!"

"Oh, stay!" cried the girl. "What do you mean, senior? Take me with you—"

Coronado lifted his hand deprecatingly, arched his brows, and then bowing again to the count, took his departure.

Syria looked after him in mingled astonishment and horror, a realization of the magician's character coming upon her innocent soul like a thunderbolt. She sprang to the door to follow him, but the count came forward and turned the key in the lock, saying:

"Excuse me, my little captive, for making you safe. Now you may beat your pretty wings against your bars as much as you please!"

Syria sank into a chair, pale as death, her dusky eyes full of a horror-stricken expression.

"Don't look so!" said the count, soothingly, his sinister eyes taking in her glorious beauty as if they loved to feast upon it. "I have gained an interview with you by an allowable stratagem—"

"And that man helped you?" moaned Syria.

"He did, of course, else how would you come here?"

"And is my father hurt?" cried the girl, forgetting her own peril for the moment in thoughts of her dear parent.

"No, he is not. He escaped the crowd last night, wandering the streets till morning, and was then picked up by Rabbi Benjamin, who was returning to his dwelling. If you will but smile upon me, most radiant Syria, I will bring him to you this very evening."

"He is safe then!" said Syria. "I don't want you to bring him to me. Better uncertainty as to my fate than to see me in the hands of a pitiless enemy."

"Now, don't say that!" said the count, deprecatingly. "You have no idea how deeply and sincerely I love you, sweet Syria—"

"Do you love me?" interrupted the girl, in a flutter of hope—"really and truly love me?"

Her eager tone, her glowing eyes, her earnest manner, all inspired the chamberlain with hope that she was about to listen to his suit.

"I do—I do!" he asserted. "I never loved any one, little fairy, as I love you!"

"Then you will let me go home to my father," she returned, joyfully. "You want to make me happy, and if I cannot be with him I shall be miserable!"

The count shook his head.

"But if you love me as I love Juan," she went on, artlessly and earnestly, "you would do anything to make me happy. Oh, let me go!"

The poor innocent maiden had little conception of the evil heart of the count, but she began to have some faint perception of the reality when he laughed and said:

"Really, I am not so disinterested as you think, little pet. I would sooner feed you on poison than lose you. Don't look so heartbroken, but make up your mind to bear what you cannot help!"

Syria moaned distressfully.

"Listen to the conclusion to which I have arrived," said the count, gently. "You shall be well treated here, attended by a woman, and meet with the respect due to your innocence and beauty. And now I will explain the position of my affairs. I am a duke's son and the king's chamberlain, but am under the displeasure of the former, and he has it in his power to effect my removal from office at any moment. I should thus be left in a state of gouted poverty until such time as my lordly father should be pleased to receive me into his favour again. He has never settled anything upon me, declaring that I was too wild to be entrusted with property. Now, Syria, child as you are, you must see that I want money?"

"My father will pay you handsomely if you will take me to him!" cried Syria.

"Then he has money?" remarked the count, in a tone of relief, his evil eyes gleaming upon her. "Though we searched your father's house so thoroughly last night, we found no money. He has it hidden somewhere, I suppose," he added, with assumed carelessness.

Syria made no reply.

"I see by your manner," pursued the count, when he had keenly watched her face for a moment, "that it is hidden, and you know where it is. Tell me now where it is. I had about decided that it was all lent out, and that I should have to give up all hope of gaining money from that quarter. But I revive again. Trust those Jews to look out for themselves! Where did the cunning Ben Israel hide his money?"

"I knew you were a bad man," said Syria, gravely, "but I had no idea you were as bad as you are. So you want me to be a robber and a traitor to my dear father, do you? I never shall! You may kill me, Count Garcia, but I shall not tell you!"

"Dear, dear! what a spirit it has!" returned the count, mockingly. "My pretty Syria, you remind me of a wee brown mouse in the paws of a big black cat! I have only been playing with you as yet—my claws have been sheathed in fur. You tempt me to show you how sharp my nails are!"

Syria shrank back in fear of the man before her, and her soul was convulsed with apprehension.

"I intend to have this treasure of your father's," went on Garcia, crossing his legs, and placing himself at his ease, "and also to have you! I intend to marry you to spite my father, and also a certain court lady whom I have been engaged to marry, and who bores me with lectures about my faults. You are powerless to resist my will, so you may as well make up your mind to become my wife and confide to me this secret about the money."

"I will never do either!" exclaimed Syria, with spirit—"never! never!"

"You know, I suppose, that I have power to end your life as well as your father's? Ordinary prudence would dictate a more conciliatory course with me. I can take my revenge upon Juan Montes, you know—put him to death as a friend of the Jew!"

Syria's eyes dilated with horror.

"The more you say the more I despise you!" she said, shudderingly. "I did not know that such bad men existed. Juan has escaped you once, and he will do it again—for he is braver than you are! I have given you my answer, and I don't wish to speak to you again."

"Very well, then, my dear; I will show you to your home—your home until you leave it as my wife."

He stamped his foot upon the floor, and a middle-aged woman of repulsive appearance entered the room in obedience to his summons.

Syria eagerly scanned her face, with the thought that in a woman she would surely find pity and assistance, but the hard countenance, the bearded eyes, the too ruddy skin, instantly showed even her innocent mind that the intruder was equally as bad as her employer.

"Here, Vaba," said the count, addressing her, "is a little maiden that I wish to entrust to your vigilant care. She must be treated with all delicacy and respect, for she is to be my wife. Get her everything

she needs or wants, and amuse her as much as you can. Is the crimson chamber ready?"

"It is," answered the woman, in a significant tone. "Shall I take her there?"

"You may go on and open it, and I will follow with her."

She bowed and disappeared, and the count said:

"This house I bought some time since, desiring to have a home of my own, to which I could retire after my quarrels with my father. My duties at the court are at present merely nominal. I go and come when I choose, and often absent myself for days together. Old Vaba is an excellent cook, and I advise you to make use of her pretty often in that capacity. I can especially recommend to you her broiled birds," and he feigned an off-hand, careless manner. "And now, since you prefer to remain my captive awhile before you become my wife, come."

He took her arm in a grip less gentle than his words, and led her up a flight of stairs to a chamber, where Vaba awaited them.

"You see it is not quite as pretty as your exquisite little virgin bower," he said, "but I hope soon to place better accommodations at your disposal—when you are the Countess Garcia!"

Syria gave but one glance at the carpeted floor, the carved bedstead, the gilded walls, the latticed window, admitting chequered streams of light, and then she sank upon a lounge and sobbed in the bitterness of anguish and despair.

"Do you change your mind?" questioned the count. "Am I less repulsive to you than before?"

Syria took no notice of him.

"Obstinate, eh? Reflection will do you good," and a sinister smile flitted over his dark visage. "Come, Vaba," he added, "I know that you are perfectly reliable, and I shall leave the keys in your hands. A little solitude will be best for our pretty captive now!"

Vaba smiled unpleasantly at Syria, and withdrew to the hall, while the count continued, more fiercely than Syria had ever heard him:

"You leave this room either as my wife or shrouded for your burial! Take your choice! But whichever you choose, bear in mind that your father lives, and that tortures will make him reveal the hiding-places of his money!"

He gave her a parting glance, full of menace, yet mingled with admiration, and then withdrew, locking the door behind him, and descended the stairs with old Vaba, leaving Syria to the bitterness of her despair.

CHAPTER XII

Dearest child,
Far better were it, doubtless, if we all
Obed the heart at all times; but so doing,
In this our present sojourn with bad men,
We must abandon many a darling object.

A MONTH had glided away since the occurrence of the last chapter—a month full of suffering and anguish for the Jews of Toledo. Their persecutions had increased so as to be almost unbearable. Scores of them were being continually arrested, on complaint of the citizens, charged with committing horrible crimes—such as they had never dreamed of; other scores had been robbed and plundered, turned out of homes and home; men, women, and even infants, had been put to death; and a terrible gloom prevailed among them. To add to their distresses, their four months of grace had been abridged, Minister De Torre having issued an order forbidding every citizen, under heavy penalties, to shelter a Jew or sell them any provisions after the first day of April.

And it was now the middle of April. Syria sat in her lonely prison, absorbed in thought, her sweet face leaning on her hand. During the month that had elapsed since her captivity she had grown thinner and paler, the scarlet had forsaken her pretty cheeks, and her dark eyes had acquired an unearthly brightness.

She had been treated with all respect and gentleness, as Count Garcia had promised; but the wearing anxiety about her father and Juan Montes, added to her uncertainty in regard to her own fate, had filled her days with bitterness and her nights with sleepless care.

Count Garcia had visited her only twice during the interval, and both times his bearing had been respectful and gentle, although persuasive and earnest; but every day brought Syria the fear of his coming. As she sat now, with the barred sunshine resting lovingly upon her glossy hair and soft, white cheeks, and flashing the diamonds upon her robe, she presented a lovely picture; and so thought Count Garcia as he unlocked the door, and entered unnoticed by his captive.

"My little fairy!" he said, coming to her side, "in what state do I find your mind to-day? I have left you to your own thoughts for two whole weeks, and I hope for a favourable greeting."

Syria looked up startled, but made no answer.

"I have news for you," he went on, taking a seat by her side—"startling news for you, although the fact has been known to me this four weeks. A new edict has been issued, forbidding every inhabitant to assist a Jew in any way, and your people have begun to scatter like leaves before the wind."

The maiden's lips quivered, and she regarded the count with dilating eyes.

"Then you will not dare to keep me here; she soon said. "You are equally forbidden with the rest."

"But who knows that you are here?" he asked, triumphantly. "No one but old Vaba, and she is devoted to me, mind and heart. Besides, I have influence with the king, and I have but to tell him that you have abjured your religion, and that I wish to marry you, to win his full and free consent."

"But your father would not like it—"

"I haven't seen my father for a month. I shall let him first about me a little before I call upon him again, or condescend to take up my residence in his house again. By the way, I've seen that strange magician twice since he brought you here," added the count, thoughtfully. "I wonder what it is that attracts me so strangely to him! I wonder why he craves selling me that secret, saying it is not yet time."

He paused, seeming to recollect himself, and remarked, abruptly changing the subject:

"I told you of the Jewish beggars that is begun. Did I mention that Rabbi Benjamin and Ben Israel start to-night for the sea-coast?"

Syria uttered a cry of anguish.

"My father going—without me?"

"Of course—since he is now convinced that you are dead. There is a report that you were drowned in the river, and old Ben Israel mourns for you as doubly lost. It will be a satisfaction to you that he will not be incurring dangers to rescue you."

Syria wept and pleaded frantically for her release, but granite is not more hard than was Count Garcia's heart.

"I can't let you go," he said, lightly. "Men are not angels, my pretty Syria. I have been absent from the city for the past fortnight, and your image has haunted me continually. Now that I have returned I shall busy on matters for our marriage."

"I'll die before I marry you!" declared Syria.

"Just as you prefer," he replied, coolly. "I suppose your father will take his wealth with him? I'm a little better off in my purse than I was a month ago, still I should like to have his money uncommonly well."

He looked thoughtful, and his eyes gleamed strangely, as though some secret plan was at work in his busy brain.

"Well, Syria," he said, at length arousing himself from his abstraction, "I have submitted to your caprices long enough. We shall be married to-night in this house, or I shall publicly denounce you as a Jewess, and have you sold to me as a slave!"

He paid no attention to her frantic cries and beseechings, and as she arose and knelt at his feet, lifting her pure angel-face to his own dark visage, he regarded her with a look of admiration, but with no sign of relenting.

"I am going out to inquire further about Ben Israel's departure," he said, "and I may not be in until late, but you may expect me. I shall bring a priest with me. I have no intentions of giving you up, my gentle Syria. I often picture to myself the happy days I shall have after our marriage—how you will shine in society and reign a very queen of beauty, and how proud I shall be of you."

He lifted her tiny hand to his lips, and while she indignantly wiped the kiss away, he left the room, locking her in.

In a few minutes her wild burst of grief was broken in upon by Vaba, who brought up her supper, saying:

"It's earlier than usual, senorita, but probably you won't care. If you want anything you can ring."

Syria bowed, and Vaba withdrew, returning to a room upon the ground floor, where a table was set and bountifully supplied with dainties similar to those she had carried to the captive.

"Why don't she come?" muttered the woman, impatiently. "She ought to know the hour by this time."

She paused, hearing a peculiar rap upon the courtyard, which she hastened to open, and admitted the same bent and ferret-eyed old woman who had so stealthily dogged the footsteps of Senor Coronado to the house a month before.

"You are late!" cried Vaba, leading her to the kitchen. "I have an unusually fine lot of Zores wines to-night, and we shall have a good time. Take off your cloak."

"Thank you!" said the woman, in a cracked voice, complying with the request. "Perhaps my poor company will be better than none, Donna Vaba! Are you as lonely as ever?"

"Lonely!" echoed Vaba, with a laugh. "Well, yes, I am. That child up-stairs does nothing but moan, and weep, and walk the floor, and call upon Juan and her father, whoever they may be, until I am wearied to death. If it wasn't for you, I don't know what I should do," and she poured out a glass of wine for herself.

"Is it possible?" said her companion, following her example. "How oily this wine is! We haven't had such wine before! How strangely we got acquainted with each other, Vaba?"

"Yes," replied Vaba, filling her glass again. "A month ago—I remember the date on account of the girl's coming here—you came to the house to sell a basket of Seville and Valencia oranges, which I bought for the girl; and then you came with dates and figs, which I bought; until we got to be good friends, and you came, as to-night, on friendly visits. Wouldn't Count Garcia rave if he knew it, and he so particular about my having company, too?"

"Count Garcia?" repeated the old woman, in surprise. "So Count Garcia is your master?"

The old housekeeper bit her lips, and seemed to blame herself for her garrulity, and abruptly changed the subject by opening another bottle of wine.

"I should think you had a hard life of it," remarked the stranger, artfully, "waiting upon an insane girl."

"Oh, she isn't insane," broke in Vaba, thrown off her guard. "She's a girl the master wants to marry against her will. She is the most beautiful being I ever saw; and you ought to hear her plead to me to help her get away! She offered me as much as a bushel of diamonds, which she wears on her dress as if they were dew."

"Is it possible? She must be rich?"

"Rich! Her father is a Jew worth more than the king himself—"

"A Jew?" interrupted the old woman.

"Yes, a Jew—one of your people, my dear!" went on Vaba, growing more and more garrulous as the wine took effect in her head, and losing all sense of caution. "He is Ben Israel, the money-lender, able to buy up a hundred Spanish grandees."

"Ben Israel, eh? I've heard of him."

"Of course you have. Who has not? I suppose he'll be leaving the country now that the minister's edict, cutting short the stay of the Jews, has been issued. I hardly dare have my dear. You know the law about sheltering a Jew."

"Yes," replied the guest, drily. "But it doesn't affect you nor me. I've abjured my faith, you know."

"Abjured, eh? I'm glad to hear it!" and Vaba sipped her wine with an appreciating smack.

"And so this captive is a Jewess—"

"Captive? Who says she's a captive?" inquired the housekeeper, with a momentary suspicion. "Oh," she added, more pleasantly, "I suppose I did allude to that little fact—though you mustn't tell of it."

"Of course not!" declared her visitor, vehemently. "Then it's all right, my dear. She's locked up in her room, and here's the key to her door," and she touched the key that dangled at her girdle.

"I shouldn't think Count Garcia would marry a Jewess," said the visitor.

"Nor I," declared Vaba. "But he is going to do so this very night. I'm to be up and have on my gown of red China silk, and he is to bring the priest with him, and she is to be a countess before she sleeps. She ought to be a proud young woman, instead of calling upon her father and Juan Montes to save her—"

"Who?" cried the visitor, springing from her chair.

"Juan Montes, the sword-maker. She loves him. It would rend your heart to hear her call his name in the night, and cry so like a child."

"Juan Montes!" repeated the visitor, sinking into her chair again, while her face became deathly pale.

"Juan Montes the rival of Count Garcia! How strange—how strange!"

She used the same expression the magician had done.

"I don't see anything strange in it," said Vaba. "These low-born people are humbling the aristocrats everywhere, and I am glad of it—though I must say I wish I was a countess," and she sighed dolorously.

"And she and Juan Montes love each other?" muttered the visitor. "That is not as it should be!"

A silence fell upon the two women for a brief space, and then the visitor asked:

"Has the magician been here lately, Vaba?"

"Only that time I told you of," was the reply.

"The count goes to him then," mused the visitor.

"I must be vigilant."

"Eh?" questioned Vaba.

"I was saying I'd like some of your preserves with this wine, Vaba. They are so delicious."

The housekeeper looked pleased at the compliment, and went to an adjoining room to procure a supply for her guest.

On finding herself alone, the old woman looked cautiously around her, and drew a small paper from

her pocket, containing a fine red powder, which she emptied into Vaba's glass of wine.

She had hardly resumed her seat when the housekeeper returned with the desired dainty.

"How nice they are!" declared the visitor. "I must learn of you, Vaba. And now let's drink to the marriage of Count Garcia to-night!"

They drank, Vaba emptying the drugged glass.

"That last glass didn't seem to taste quite as good as the rest," she said, sleepily. "I think, my dear—better go—"

She winked once or twice, her head fell forward upon her breast, and she was fast asleep. The visitor waited a few moments, then cautiously arose, unfastened the key from Vaba's girdle, and taking the lamp in her hand, went up-stairs.

She tried the various doors softly, and soon arrived at Syria's, which she unlocked, and then silently entered the room.

The maiden was standing by the window, pale and tearless, gazing through the lattice at the deep blue sky with a longing and heartbroken expression.

"Syria," said the old woman.

The maiden turned, and regarded her visitor in astonishment.

"She is royally beautiful," murmured the old woman to herself. "She is worthy of Juan Montes, and more than worthy. What a dainty little queen!"

"Where is Vaba?" asked the captive.

"In a drugged sleep," was the reply. "I have come to save you. Hurry on your cloak and veil! We must begone!"

Syria regarded her visitor with a wild and incredulous gaze for an instant, and then, sobbing with joy, she fastened on her cloak, hood, and veil, and hastened from the room.

"Wait a moment," said her deliverer, pausing outside the door. "I must turn the bolt in the lock, so that the count may be delayed as long as possible."

She did so, and thrust the key in her pocket, and the two women left the dwelling.

"Your father is at Rabbi Benjamin's," said the old woman, as they hastened along the street. "I will take you there. You had better leave the city as soon as possible, for you are not safe near Count Garcia."

"Oh, how can I ever thank you enough?" sobbed Syria, gratefully. "I shall love you as long as I live and pray for you till I die. Tell me your name, that I may know to whom I owe my life and my father's, for his depends upon mine."

The woman wiped a tear from her eyes, and said: "I am not worthy of your pure prayers, sweet child; but if you want to pray for me, you can call me old Tomasina, and the Great Being will know who you mean."

"Dear Tomasina," whispered Syria, affectionately, "I shall always remember your name."

They sped along with full hearts through the most retired streets, and at length reached the dwelling of Rabbi Benjamin.

"I leave you here!" said Tomasina. "Hasten away from the city. Farewell!"

"Won't you come in with me?" cried Syria. "I want my father to thank you for your goodness."

Tomasina shook her head.

"I cannot," she answered. "Your thanks are enough. Farewell, Syria, farewell!"

She turned and flitted away before Syria could repeat her solicitations, and the maiden ascended the steps and knocked for admittance.

Rabbi Benjamin answered the summons.

"Is my father here?" she asked, putting back her veil and entering the hall.

The good rabbi slammed the door, and uttered a joyful cry.

The next moment Ben Israel rushed into the hall to assist his friend, supposing an attack had been made upon the dwelling, and clasped his daughter to his breast.

"Syria!" he cried, incredulously. "My little Syria! She is alive! The river has given up its dead! Oh, my child! my daughter!"

The room was speedily filled with the members of the family, including Ester, who embraced the maiden, and a scene of joyful excitement prevailed, in which the accomplished scholar, Rabbi Benjamin, took a conspicuous part.

Ben Israel finally took his daughter in his arms, and carried her into an adjoining parlour where they were left to have a joyful reunion by themselves.

"Where have you been this weary, dreary month, my darling?" he asked, gazing searchingly upon her face and marking its thinness.

"Been? Oh, father, I have suffered so!" and the tears sprang to her eyes. "If it had not been for a strange providence, you would have left Toledo to-night and lost your daughter for ever!"

"You know we intended to leave to-night?"

The maiden replied by relating all that had transpired since their separation, and with her head pillowed upon her father's loving breast, the scarlet came back to her cheeks, and the old joyous light to her eyes.



[SYRIA RELEASED BY TOMASINA]

"The villains!" cried Ben Israel, when she had concluded. "If I had but that wretch of a magician, or Count Garcia, under my hands!"

"God will punish them, dear father!" said Syria, gently. "And He will reward that good Tomasina, too."

"Bless her!" exclaimed the father, fervently, pressing his daughter closer to his heart. "How grateful I am, my darling, that you have been preserved unstained and spotless through all these perils. How pleased Juan will be—"

"Juan, father?"

"Yes, my love. He has searched the city over and over since we lost you. He went to see the magician, who told him that you were dead, but he would not believe it. He had too much faith in you. He has been here several times to inquire if we have heard of you, and is coming here to-night to see you off."

"And may I see him, father?"

"Yes, my daughter—to bid him an eternal farewell. We go to meet Rafael Ezra, who has been strangely detained. I have not heard from him within the month, and fear something has happened to him."

"Shall you take your money with you, father?"

"No, Syria," replied her father, thoughtfully; "it would not be safe to do so. Our people have been leaving as fast as they could within the last fortnight, and many of them carried fortunes with them, and they have all been set upon by Captain Monaldi and his band, and cruelly robbed. The robber-chief has a retreat among the mountains at a little distance, and has been unusually active of late."

"Then I would leave it, father. Rafael Ezra could come for it."

"He could not, being a Jew. I propose to communicate the secret to Juan Montes to-night, and have him bring it to me when we get settled somewhere. He is noble and honourable, and will gladly do it for me."

The father and daughter sat for a long time engaged in conversation, and the family were then admitted to share the joy.

Either sobbed and wept over her young mistress again and again, in a state of frantic joy.

The evening came on and deepened, and before the family of Rabbi Benjamin had recovered their ordinary calmness and quietness, a low knock at the outer door announced the arrival of Juan Montes. He was admitted, and his father with him.

"Juan," said Ben Israel, choking with his joy, "the lost is found—the dead is alive!"

He pointed to the parlour, from which the family

came forth, and Juan went in and met Syria. In their wild joy they forgot that the maiden was pledged to another, and clasped each other in a close embrace.

Ben Israel left them together for an hour to their joy, and then he entered the room, and said:

"Juan, we leave to-night, as you know. Before I go I have one favour to ask of you. I trust your honour to keep it implicitly secret."

Juan assented, and Ben Israel proceeded:

"I am rich, Don Juan, and my money is all hidden in a secret place. I cannot take it with me. When we are settled somewhere will you bring it to me? I will share it with you for your trouble—"

"I would not wish to share it, Ben Israel," responded Juan. "I would take it to you as I would to my own father. Do not speak of pay, but trust me as a son."

His honest face and thoughtful eyes attested his sincerity.

"Will you come with me and see its hiding-place?" asked Ben Israel. "It is not far."

Juan assented, and the money-lender bade Syria put on her cloak and veil and accompany them, remarking to the young sword-maker that he could not bear to leave his daughter behind him, even for so brief a space of time.

As they passed out into the hall where the family were assembled, Senor Montes grasped Syria's hand heartily, saying:

"So, you were in the magician's house, your father tells me, when he said you were drowned? I wouldn't wonder, Juan, if some of his other statements turned out as reliable. I can't get rid of the idea that I've seen that magician before—but where, I cannot tell. His face puzzles me."

Ben Israel led his daughter and Juan Montes from the house, and the three glided silently along the streets; Syria between the two she loved so well, towards a cemetery, whose marble monuments rose like ghosts in the starlight.

"Here is the place," said the Jew, as they passed in among the graves. "Here!"

He paused at a tomb of glittering marble, and said:

"In this place my wife is laid. We will go in."

He unlocked the door, and they entered. He then turned on the light of a lantern he carried under his cloak, and the young couple beheld a coffin lying upon a block of marble.

"I love to visit this spot," said Ben Israel, "after the death of my wife, and gradually the idea grew upon me to conceal my wealth here, so that no popular outbreak could deprive my Syria of her patrimony. And so I contrived to dig a vault underneath this

tomb—a deep and narrow vault—where all my wealth is hidden."

He touched a spring between a couple of the blocks of marble that formed the flooring, and it flew up, revealing the vault he spoke of. It was filled with bags of gold and diamonds. The block that covered the cavity rested on stout transoms of iron.

After Ben Israel had exhibited his wealth, and impressed upon the mind of Juan Montes the secret of the spring and the particular block under which the treasure rested, he made everything secure as before, and approached the coffin of his wife.

As he and Syria stood beside it, weeping silently, and bidding it a last farewell, Juan could not repress his tears of sympathy.

"And now let us go," said Ben Israel, after a long silence, leading Syria away. "Yet, stay! I have never trusted any man as I have trusted you to-night, Juan Montes, yet I feel that I have not relied upon your honour and your love for Syria in vain. In that little vault is a fast fortune, and I now give it entirely into your keeping."

"To be restored to you whenever you shall write me where to bring it," responded Juan, clasping the hand of the Jew.

They left the vault. Ben Israel looked it, giving Juan the key, and then the three proceeded in silence and tears to the rabbi's dwelling.

"We are all ready," said the rabbi, meeting them at the door. "Our few valuables and provisions are packed upon the backs of our animals in the court. My daughters have put up clothing for us all, including Syria."

Syria withdrew with one of the daughters of Rabbi Benjamin, and soon returned habited in a soft, dark travelling robe. During her absence she had removed the diamonds from her former dress, and these, enclosed in a little box, she now gave to Juan saying:

"They are for your shop. Do not look at them until I am gone. If it had not been for me, you know, you would have been unmolested."

"It is time to go," said Ben Israel, with emotion.

"Farewell, Don Juan. My blessing remains with you!"

The lovers embraced with agonized hearts, and Syria was then placed half-fainting upon her horse, the rest of the party mounted, and they all rode out of the court and down the street, leaving Juan Montes standing on the rabbi's steps beside his foster-father, a statue of despair.

(To be continued.)



THE SEVENTH MARRIAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"The Warning Voice," "Man and his Idol," "Mrs Larkhall's
Boarding School," &c.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MIDNIGHT MESSAGE.

There rang on a sudden a passionate cry.
It will ring in my heart and my ears till I die.

Tennyson.

On the night of the occurrence just narrated there was a dinner-party and ball at one of the noble mansions in Portman Square.

The house was a blaze of light from roof to basement. A striped awning stretched from the doorway to the edge of the pavement, and a crimson druggot, with flowered borders, was laid over the steps and along the hall as far as the eye could see, losing itself in a grove of camellias and other choice plants, which the spring crowd outside declared were artificial, assigning as a reason that "they were too beautiful to be real!"

A like opinion was entertained as to the company as carriage after carriage drove up and set down its freight of beauty and fashion. The dingy crowd would not believe in the reality of pearly complexions or abundant tresses, and openly questioned whether the sylph-like forms, which flitted past them like visions of beauty, did not owe more to art than nature.

In this they were severe—as it is in the nature of critics to be on matters which they don't understand—for Lady Severn, the hostess of the evening, had been singularly fortunate in inducing the reigning belles of the season to accept invitations on this occasion. Her drawing-room presented, in consequence, a most attractive aspect. Wherever the eye was directed it encountered fair faces and exquisite forms—delicate blooms from aristocratic conservatories, grouped in a perfect "Bouquet of Beauty."

To Lady Severn herself this assembly was a triumph, and as she sat on a raised dais at the upper end of the rooms and gazed around, her face was radiant with satisfaction.

In all England there was no prouder woman than her ladyship. You could read this in her face. The fair, white brow with which it was crowned seemed made for a coronet; the eyes, too, had a haughty, supercilious look, which accorded well with the rest of the bold and decidedly marked features.

[FINDING THE BODY OF LEONARD HAVERING.]

But her pride was not of the vulgar type. It did not express itself in overbearing manners, or in loud and offensive display.

Her toilet was a model of simplicity.

On the present occasion she wore a dress of wine-coloured velvet, so dark that it appeared black except where the light caught it, and showed both its colour and that its texture was of the finest that the looms of Genoa can produce. This was relieved by a fall of Brussels lace, clasped at the throat by a brooch, formed of a single red diamond—the rarity of the colour both adding to and concealing its fabulous value. The head-dress was of a simple character, the hair itself forming, as it should, the chief ornament; but the hair-coronet, which so well became the general style of her ladyship's features, was relieved by scattered points of red diamond.

Lady Severn was the sister of Lady Lomax.

She had never approved of the match with Sir Gervase Lomax, which had resulted so disastrously; but, at the same time, she had refused to turn her back upon her sister or her children, when, in consequence of the father's outlawry, they were reduced to desperation. It was to her influence that they owed the family allowance which rendered them independent of the world. She also, be sure, insisted on that condition which forbade them degrading themselves by any kind of employment.

While they could be preserved from that taint, she promised that her house should always be open to them; that they should enjoy all the advantages of moving in her circle; and that, so far as her power went, no one should dare to breathe a word in their disparagement.

And what, it may be asked, had Lord Severn to say to this arrangement?

The truth is, Lord Severn was nobody. People always spoke of the pair as "Lady Severn and her husband." Indeed, among friends, "Our husband" was the title his lordship usually went by. He was a little, thin, thread-paper of a man, with a disagreeable habit of clearing his throat with a loud "Hem!" as if he was going to say something, and never saying it. Occasionally, in his lady's absence, he would astonish persons by breaking out, *apropos* of nothing, with the assertion that Lady Severn was a remarkable woman; but as this was hardly a point admitting of discussion with the husband, it seldom produced any other effect than that of making everybody uncomfortable, and leaving his lordship to subside into dead silence.

When we add that "Our husband" was given to taking snuff furtively and against the express mandate

and behest of his lady, generally behind her back, and always in fear and trembling, enough has been said to render his introduction complete.

Whether "Our husband" really approved of all that was done for Lady Lomax may be doubted; but he liked Arthur as a handsome, manly fellow, and his admiration for Ada and Constance was unbounded. He once even went so far as to admit to Lady Severn that "their's was the style of beauty he liked," and as they were blondes, while his wife was dark, it is possible that he soon regretted having made the assertion.

As Lady Severn sat in state to-night, receiving those of her guests who had been invited to the ball only, not to the dinner, Ada Lomax occupied a seat by her side, and, as usual, shone conspicuous for her loveliness even in that "Bouquet of Beauty."

Her eyes had a strained look and her face was pale, but this was attributed to the fatigue of the London season.

No one guessed the real cause of it.

No one suspected the agony that preyed on that young heart, and made its victim despair of relief except in madness or death.

Between the introductions, Lady Severn listened to the explanation Ada gave of recent family events.

"And so I understand," she said, after an interruption, "that you have heard nothing of that darling, thoughtless, wicked boy, Arthur, for a whole week?"

"For more than a week," Ada replied.

"And have you—has mamma no idea of what could have induced him to leave home?"

The fair girl shuddered, then answered quickly:

"She has no idea whatever."

"Strange! And how cruelly thoughtless, unless something has happened. Do you think there is anything wrong?"

"Wrong!"

The blanched lips quivered as they echoed that word.

"You mistake," said Lady Severn. "I don't, of course, mean to impute anything morally wrong to dear Arthur; he is incapable of that. But is it possible that any accident has befallen him?"

"I—have—feared so," said Ada, in a subdued voice, and as if giving expression to the thought with reluctance; "but I would not, for the world, mamma should think this."

"Quite right," replied her ladyship; "but now, what steps have been taken to ascertain the truth? Have you advertised?"

"Yes, daily; but in as guarded a manner as possible."

so as not to compromise Arthur's name or bring a scandal upon us. The world is so censorious!"

"And not without cause, child. But what further? You have confided this secret to some one?"

"To our friends, the Treillians."

Involuntarily she blushed, and trembled at the mention of that name.

Lady Severn detected it.

"To Hammet, I presume?" she said.

"Yes. He is Arthur's friend."

"I know. And as Arthur's friend he is harmless enough. What I have sometimes feared is that he is something more to you, Ada, than your brother's friend. I hope not. I trust not. A decent young fellow enough, no doubt; but I have higher views for you, darling. You are too precious to be thrown away on a mere gentleman's son. I look to you to restore the fortunes of your branch of our family. Why, what ails you, Ada?"

She might well ask.

The beautiful face which turned from hers had grown suddenly colourless; the hand which she grasped was like a stone.

"It is nothing," murmured the white lips. "The rooms are hot—and—"

"You love Hammet Treillian?" said her ladyship, eternally.

"No!" cried Ada, strangely excited. "Oh, no, no! He is nothing—nothing to me."

Lady Severn heard the denial, and could not doubt its sincerity; yet felt that there was some mystery here which she could not fathom.

"I am glad, very glad to hear it," was all she said. "And so," she presently resumed, "the Treillians have taken up the search for Arthur, but without effect?"

"Yes; it was while on her way to their home that the accident befel Constance which has given us so much additional alarm. I thought mamma would have died when I was compelled to tell her of that fresh calamity. Happily we have received a letter in the dear child's own hand, which sets our minds at ease so far. It appears that, when knocked down by the cab, she was taken to the Hon. Leonard Havering's house, which was close by. There she received every care."

"Most fortunate!" exclaimed her ladyship. "We know the Havering's. They visit us. Leonard is the pride of the family—so handsome, so brave, but a little, little wild. However, they all doat on him. Well, and why did you not hear from Constance for so long?"

"Because fever and delirium set in, and they could not ascertain either her name or address. The strange part of the affair is that she writes from Canterbury."

"From Canterbury?"

The lady's face grew instantly serious.

"That is where his regiment is quartered," she said, in a serious tone.

"Yes."

"But this is strange. Constance must have been removed there while ill, and if so, for what purpose? Oh—but no, with all her inexperience she would not have been so imprudent as to accompany a young man like Havering to Canterbury! No, no, impossible."

Her ladyship uttered the last word in a high, excited tone. As she did so, she was startled by a face being thrust between her own and that of her fair niece.

"May I ask what is impossible?" said a man's voice.

"Mr. Garmeson!" cried her ladyship, angrily.

"Offended?" asked the banker, playfully. "No, I hope not. Your ladyship spoke so loud that I can't have surprised a secret?"

"Oh, no, we have no secrets, Ada and I," Lady Severn replied, forcing a smile, though in her heart she resented the man's ill-breeding, old friend as he was.

"That's right, then," he returns. "And how is our fair young friend to-night?" he asked, addressing Ada, and holding out an ungloved hand.

She simply bowed, and placed her hand in the broad palm, shuddering as it closed round her fingers, in spite of the white kid which covered them.

"Any fresh news of dear Arthur?" asked the banker, with a malicious smile.

"None," replied Ada.

"Is it true that our sweet Constance has also disappeared?"

"She has gone on a visit—"

"To a young cavalry officer, I understand?"

"Hush! for mercy's sake!" pleaded the distressed girl, fearful above everything lest the words should reach the ears of those about her.

Fortunately Lady Severn, who had risen to receive a friend, heard nothing of this.

As she resumed her seat, a gentleman of foreign aspect came up, and laid two fingers on the banker's arm.

"Ah, my dear count!" cried Garmeson, in affected

rapture. "Glad you've had the courage to come. Permit me, the Count Rosario—Lady Severn—Miss Lomax."

"Lomax!" exclaimed the count. "Ah, I have had the pleasure of meeting—"

"The lady's brother," interposed the banker.

"Quite right. When you first came to England."

"No, no. Only a week since," persisted the count.

"Then you may know something of his fate?" exclaimed Ada.

"No. He knows nothing," Garmeson said, in a short, decided tone. "Your memory grows worse and worse, count."

The other admitted it, with a shrug of his shoulders, an elevation of his eyebrows, and a throwing up of his hands, after the manner of his countrymen, and the friends bowed and retired.

The eyes of Lady Severn and her niece met in an inquiring glance as they went. Both entertained a vague suspicion; neither expressed it in words.

Count Rosario was Garmeson's introduction, and as he had been the family banker for half a century, his friends were always received without question. Still the count did not create a favourable impression. His appearance justified all that Jack Thorne had told Hammet Treillian respecting him—for this was the Italian of whom he spoke as being a gemmer of the most desperate class. The man had a serpent-like head, and a retreating, wrinkled forehead, his hair was black, cut quite close, and shone more like seal skin, than the natural covering of the human head. The eyes also, were like those of the seal, but shared in the sinister look which pervaded the long, narrow, yellow face, across which a black moustache extended, losing itself in wavy rat-tail points. The count was tall, square-shouldered, and might have been considered a good figure, had not all his clothes fitted him so tightly as to suggest the idea of his being padded from head to foot.

Shortly after the introduction of this distinguished personage dancing commenced, and no further opportunity presented itself for renewing the conversation between Lady Severn and her niece which Garmeson had interrupted.

Ada danced but little, and it might have been observed that her partners were always of the banker's introduction.

Once or twice the Count Rosario evidently expressed to his friend a wish to dance with her, but he was never permitted to do so.

What excuses were made Ada could not tell, but they answered the purpose, and she was glad in her heart that they did so.

Hour after hour passed on, the night grew late, Lady Severn was exhausted, and Ada Lomax had resumed her seat by her side, when, to their surprise, Lord Severn, "Our husband," suddenly presented himself before them.

He was in a state of flurry and excitement, and the thumb and finger of both his white kid gloves were suspiciously pressed together—concealing, in fact, a pinch of brown rappee.

"Hem!" he began in his customary startling manner.

His lady looked up sharply.

"Tony!" she exclaimed, "how you frighten one."

"But, my dear—" he faltered.

"And as I live!" interrupted her ladyship, "you are taking snuff! Snuff in your white gloves—positively!"

His lordship shuffled his hands behind him, wiping his thumbs and fingers as he did so like a detected school-boy.

"But, Margaret, my dear," he began.

"Well?" the lady demanded.

"The editor, my dear—the editor of the What-is-it—never recollect names—just arrived. Horrible news, my dear by telegraph, from Canterbury—"

"Canterbury!" exclaimed her ladyship and Ada Lomax in a breath.

"Hem! yes, my dear—but what's the matter? Oh, here is Mr. What's-his-name? Editor of the What-is-it? He'll tell you all about it, I desay."

And he pointed to a prematurely-old young man, wearing glasses, who had advanced at the moment.

All who were in that part of the room gathered round, curious to hear what the editor had to communicate.

"My information, Lady Severn, is very slight," he said. "We have just been telegraphed from Canterbury that Captain the Hon. Leonard Havering has been found murdered in the neighbourhood of the cavalry barracks. He was a friend of yours?"

"Yes," her ladyship gasped.

Her companion sat dumb with horror.

"The telegram adds that the crime is supposed to have been instigated by jealousy."

"Do—you—know—their—names?" Ada asked, her lips trembling so that they could scarcely form the words one by one.

"Partly," was the answer; "the name of the young lady is Constance Lomax."

At the mention of that name the hapless sister uttered a long, piercing scream, and, attempting to rise, fell back into the arms of Lady Severn.

CHAPTER XIV.

OUTSIDE THE GATES.

What is this tumult of the night?
And who are these that mock the sight?
A budding woman this should be—
A woman thus unwomanly!

To give the details of what the editor thus related in brief, it will be necessary to return to the barrack-yard at Canterbury.

The cries and murmurs, accompanied by a battering with sticks, led to the gates being very speedily opened.

Then those within caught sight of a motley and anarchy crowd, which at once poured into the barrack-yard in a stream. Soldiers, women, roughs, vagrants, boys, with a sprinkling of decently-dressed people, constituted the crowd, which, even as it moved, pressed round one central object, on which all eyes were fixed.

As the corporal of the guard advanced, demanding the cause of this strange proceeding, those in front stood aside, and made a lane for him to pass through.

Stepping forward, he found himself confronting a woman of wild, ragged aspect, who appeared leading a white horse by the bridle, her hand close to the bit, as if she understood horses, and was accustomed to control them. There was a man's saddle on the horse, but a second woman was riding on it, sideways, and clutching at the pommel as if with difficulty keeping her slippery seat.

The corporal looked at the woman who was leading the horse, and saw that she had black eyes, a tanned and freckled face, and a mass of rusty-black hair, which hung about her like a cult's mane. She was poorly dressed in short clothes that did not reach the tops of her laced-up boots; an old cloak hung from her shoulders, and a tawny wallet rested on her left hip.

All this he took in at a glance, and so satisfied himself that he had never seen her before.

Then he looked at the horse, which had been down, and was stained with mire and blood.

"Captain Havering's horse!" he exclaimed, instantly recognizing it. "How did you come by it?"

"Found it," said the woman, who was not more than eighteen, speaking in a voice hoarse from perpetual cold.

"Found it?" echoed the soldier.

"Yes."

"And this woman, who is she?"

He was looking at the rider as he spoke, and had just time to notice that she wore a fantastic bonnet, and had a low forehead, and long dangling earrings, when he was utterly disconcerted by her springing into his arms, and so alighting.

"Ah, mon Dieu!" she cried, raising and spreading out her hands, "you know not me, m'sieur? I was La Grange, Madame in Grange, but this moment I am beside myself. I am another—a one. Oh, so brave capitaine! Ze dear, beautiful, brave man! I love him worse than myself. Oh, mooh, mooh worse!"

She was still speaking when Captain Poulter, Thorne, the Canary, and three or four others of their party came up, on their way to the ball at the Deans.

"What does all this mean?" Poulter asked, in amazement.

"That is what I'm trying to understand, sir," said the corporal.

"Trying to be hanged!" cried Poulter. "Here you, one of you, explain. What brings you here? And, deuce take it, whose horse is that? Why, it's Havering's!"

"Yes," said La Grange.

"And who are you?" he demanded.

"Oh, he live in my beautiful, beautiful house."

"I recollect. And how came the horse in your possession?" Poulter asked, turning sharply to the girl, who still clutched at the bridle.

"Honestly," was the sullen answer.

"Indeed! Did Captain Havering entrust it to you?"

"No."

"Yet you bring it here?"

"Where should I take it?" the girl asked, sharply.

"Had you there, dear boy," cried Jack Thorne, nudging his friend, and coolly stepping in front of him. "You're too rough, too imperious. Just like you. Now, dear girl, tell us the story in your own way, tell us all about it—what has happened, and where it happened, and how it happened, all in your own way."

"Pardon, m'sieur," interposed Madame La Grange, tossing her head and jingling her earrings. "I will myself to tell you. It is the dusk. I am at my wits' end."

Then, melted by the magic of a generous word,

yet scorned to betray her weakness, she drew herself up, and marched on.

They had gone some three miles now, and soon the white road began to branch off to right and left in bridle-paths and sheep-tracks that led away into the open country. Vegetation was sparse at this point; but a few trees were scattered about singly and in clumps, and there was a sprinkling of underwood, briar, and furze and brake, all black and stunted in this winter time, adding to, rather than detracting from, the desolation of the place.

At one point a stream passed under the road, through a tunnelled way, and spread out on the right hand to what, in summer, was a pond with rushes in it, and water-lilies floating on its surface, but had now dwindled to a morass. On the further side of this tree grow, forming a little copse of utterly forlorn and forsaken aspect.

As they approached this place, Madge suddenly started, and cried out.

"See!" she shrieked.

They halted, and looked in the direction in which her outstretched finger pointed. The lanterns only formed a luminous circle on the ground, and the torches were smouldering: the range of light, therefore, was limited.

And within that range nothing unusual met their eyes.

"You did not see him?" demanded Madge. "Not the man who crossed the road before us, and plunged into the copse?"

No. Of all the party not one had seen him. They were certain—they were positive of this; but their denial made her angry.

"Come," she cried out, seizing a lantern as she spoke. "Who will search with me? Who has the courage? What! are you all cowards?"

She held the lantern above her head, and darted from the road; then carefully skirting the morass—round which the ground was soft and yielding—struggled toward the trees.

Animated by her example, some followed, and some lingered in the road. The general impression was that she had been mistaken. And if it was not a fancy and a delusion, the more reasonable felt that it was useless to make for the copse, as the darkness would enable the individual, whoever he might be, to escape before the place of his retreat could be reached.

Such was the position of affairs when, to the astonishment of the whole party, Madge Cooter, whose figure was distinctly visible in the light of the lantern which she carried, suddenly stopped, started, and then dropped on her knees in the yielding mud.

Some thought she had fallen, but those nearer also stopped at the same moment, and their faces and actions exhibited surprise and consternation.

Exclamations of horror burst from every lip.

"Who is it?" demanded Poulter, rushing to the spot. "What has happened?"

"Look—look!" she said, turning an excited face toward him.

Thus addressed, he bent his head over her shoulder, and there beheld a sight at which he recoiled with horror.

"Good heaven!" he exclaimed, in an awed and incredulous tone. "Leonard Haverling—dead!"

It was, indeed, the face of Leonard Haverling which, white and ghastly, stared up into the dark night with eyes to which light and darkness had become alike indifferent. His body lay half-submerged in the mud of the morass, and only the noble head, and those broad shoulders, and that manly chest of his could be seen, crushing down the withered rushes, and the long grass.

The fine, classic head of the young soldier was beautiful even in death; but it had received one terrible disfigurement. On the left temple there was the mark where a bullet had entered the head, splintering as it went, and from this an ensanguined stream was yet trickling.

From this wound it was obvious that instant death had resulted.

"This is serious," said Poulter, as he examined the wound by the lantern light. "There has been foul play here. The poor fellow has been murdered!"

"Murdered!" passed from lip to lip like an echo, and there was a momentary silence as if each shuddered in realizing the idea which that word conveyed.

For though the minds of all present had been prepared for some catastrophe, it was for something short of this horror—this strange and monstrous sight.

That one so young and handsome, so highly born, so brave, and so beloved—one to whom the world opened so brilliant a prospect—should be lying out there in the darkness, dead and mutilated, seemed incredible!

Yet the stern and terrible reality of the fact was not to be questioned.

Seeing that, the natural, the inevitable inquiry was—who had been guilty of this monstrous deed?

Surely not the woman who knelt beside the body, and wept over it, with a wild and passionate sorrow, as over one who had been near and dear to her?

She was a low, rough creature, the associate of the worst of characters, and had been found in possession of the horse from which the dead man had evidently fallen; but could this have been her act?

Both Poulter and Jack Thorn asked themselves this question. While they did so, and while the soldiers who were of the party dragged their dead captain from the morass, and laid his senseless form on the dry ground, the tramping of feet in the direction of the copse arrested attention.

It was one of the smaller parties who had been out on the search and who had accidentally come upon this scene.

A glance at the dead body of Leonard Haverling, stretched on the grass, was sufficient to inform them of the real state of affairs.

"You see!" cried Captain Poulter, in a voice husky with emotion—"you see what has happened? Have you discovered any trace of the perpetrator of this horrible crime?"

"Yes," said the foremost of the party.

"Thank God! But what is it?"

"Why, captain, on the other side of the copse there, not a hundred yards off, we picked up this soldier's cap. It's been lately dropped there, and there's blood upon the lining."

He held out a forage-cap, such as was worn in the regiment stationed at the barracks, as he spoke.

"What troop?" asked the captain, eagerly.

"Troop A."

"What name—what number is there on it?"

"There's neither one nor the other," was the reply. "Most likely it belongs to some recruit, just joined—"

"Right," cried Poulter. "Our suspicions are confirmed. A thousand to one it's Abel Stone who's guilty of this horrible outrage!"

The facts of the case certainly warranted that conclusion.

(To be continued.)

SAY NOT WOMAN'S LOVE IS BOUGHT.

Oh! say not woman's love is bought
With vain and empty treasure!
Oh! say not woman's heart is caught
By every idle pleasure!

When first her gentle bosom knows
Love's flame, it wanders never!
Deep in her heart the passion glows,
She loves, and loves for ever.

Oh! say not woman's false as fair,
That like the bee she ranges,
Still seeking flowers more sweet and rare,
As fickle fancy changes.

Ah! no, the love that first can warm
Will leave her bosom never!
No second passion e'er can charm—
She loves, and loves for ever. S. M. R.

LADY VENETIA.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Oh, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

Shakespeare.

LUCIA watched the receding figure of the stranger as long as it was visible, and then, with a buoyant spring, gained the side of the cradle, and said with joyful intonation:

"Little Pierro, my fortune is made, and so is yours, for I will have you taught to sing as I do."

"Only the angels can hope to do that, signorina; but I am glad you think of me, for I love you—I love you so dearly!" and his thin fingers stroked her shining hair.

"Yes, Pierro," continued the excited girl, "I will take charge of your education, and as soon as I am able I will have you removed to Reggio with your good mother. We shall find something for her to do, and your fingers shall be taught to make soul-stirring music on the violin. You must have an instrument, you know, and some day you shall be world-renowned by your skill upon it."

The pale, meagre face of the boy flushed, and he excitedly said:

"That will be grand—grand! If I could learn to use my fingers well, I should not care so much about my crippled feet."

Lucia left a tear and a kiss upon the child's brow, and softly said:

"God is good to all his children, Pierro, and he shows his love for you by sending me hither to help you on in the only career that you can be fitted for."

"Yes, God was very good when he sent you to

our poor house, signorina, and I shall always thank him for it."

At that moment Rosella returned, full of curiosity concerning the stranger who had entered the house in her absence. Lucia, in glowing language, informed her of what had occurred, and dwelt on his offers of assistance, on the certainty she now felt that she would be enabled to commence her intended career in a creditable manner. The woman was shrewd and intelligent for one of her class, and she asked:

"Was this gentleman an utter stranger to you, signorina? If he was, he must have taken a very sudden fancy to you, to make such offers of service in the little time he was here."

"He is not an entire stranger, Rosella. He has seen me before and recognized me, though I confess I did not remember him. I sang at a party at Reggio when I visited that place with the Marchesa di Colonna. Senor Strozzi was present on that occasion, and he knew that an offer had been afterwards made to him by the manager of the opera troupe. Only think, Rosella, how fortunate it is for me that the prima donna has lost her voice for a season. I do not wish her any evil, I am sure, but if she will only remain here till I have a chance to become famous, my fortune is made."

Rosella looked into the eager face of the speaker, now flushed with excitement and sparkling with animation, and she could not resist her enthusiasm. She warmly said:

"I hope the signor was in earnest, and you may now hear from the manager; but until the letter actually comes I shall be afraid to believe in such good fortune. If he had not been so particular about having Sister Maria go with you, I might have been suspicious of him, but he seems at least to have ideas of propriety about such a young thing as you are."

"Dear Rosella, he is a noble, kind gentleman, and I feel very sure that I shall hear from Reggio before long. I wish Sister Maria would come back, that I may tell her what fine prospects have opened before me."

"She cannot be much longer gone," replied the smiling Rosella, "and it will be rare news to her that you have found so influential a friend."

On the following day the nun returned, wearied and disappointed. She had hoped to obtain an advance on the next quarter's rent of her small estate, but found such sickness and suffering in the family of her tenant that she relinquished all hope of assistance from that quarter for several months to come. She devoted herself to nursing them back to health, and returned even poorer than she went.

Lucia was glad to lighten her care by informing her of what had occurred during her absence. Sister Maria inquired minutely concerning the stranger, and did not seem surprised that the singing of Lucia had led to the interest Strozzi manifested for her. Nothing seemed to her more natural, since he had known her in her more fortunate days, and she smiled hopefully as she said:

"We must wait and see what will come of it, my dear. I do not think any lover of music who has heard your voice will be likely to forget its charming qualities. If the prima donna is ill, it will evidently be to the manager's interest to secure such a substitute as you will prove."

"Then you think Signor Strozzi will not forget his promises? that he was not amusing himself at the expense of a credulous girl, but to cast all thought of her into oblivion when she is removed from his sight?"

"I trust not, Lucia; but a few days will determine. If it is possible to do so, I will see Dr. Strozzi, learn something about his kinsman, and then I can satisfy any lingering doubts I may have concerning this stranger."

"Do not cherish doubts, dear sister; let us rather hope, for that is all we now have to sustain us," replied Lucia, with the sanguine impulsiveness of her years. "I know not whether we shall turn, if—if—No. I will not anticipate disappointment in an affair of such vital importance to me."

The nun said no more, and many days of weary expectation passed away.

She journeyed on foot to Colonna in the hope that an interview with the physician might give her some assurance of the character of his kinsman; but to her annoyance learned that Dr. Strozzi had gone on a visit to Naples, from which he was not expected to return for several weeks.

Hope had almost died out, when, one morning, a man wearing the shrouding black garments and shawl hat of a priest reined up his mule in front of the cottage and dismounted. He gravely approached the door, and when he stood upon the threshold, said:

"I believe this is the cottage of Rosella, the widow of Benedetto, the stone mason?"

Rosella, who was alone in the outer room, arose and welcomed him, at the same time informing him that she was the person referred to.

CHAPTER XXX.

Revenge maintains her empire in the breast,
Though every other feeling sinks to rest.
Trevanion.

THE following morning broke clear and balmy. The weather was delightful, and nature still wore her robes of gorgeous verdure in that climate in which the approach of winter is scarcely felt.

Rosella prepared an early breakfast, and all was in readiness for the departure of the travellers when a calèche was driven to the door, followed by the grave and dignified man who had proffered his services as escort.

The poor widow was consoled for their departure by the promise that, so soon as they were settled in their new home, she should be removed to Reggio, Pierro placed under good medical attendance, and, when strong enough, his musical education should commence.

Lucia, with a tear in her eye and the bright smile of hope and expectation upon her lips, bade the little fellow good-bye, and took her place beside Sister Maria in the vehicle. The box containing their scanty possessions was strapped on behind, and the party set out.

The road wound through a romantic and beautiful country, and they travelled on in the best spirits, conversing hopefully with each other, and occasionally exchanging a few sentences with Tomaso, who managed to keep up with the calèche.

At noon they stopped beneath the shade of some forest trees, and partook of the luncheon which the forethought of their escort had provided, and the grave courtesy he maintained was in perfect keeping with his assumed character. When they were ready to set out again, the nun inquired:

"Is it quite certain that we shall find the yacht awaiting us when we reach the sea-coast?"

"I have no doubt that we shall find a fairy bark ready to waft the signorina on to fame and fortune," he replied, with a smile. "Our land journey will be rather tedious and disagreeable, for the country on which we shall soon enter is rough and broken. But you will enjoy the voyage all the more from the contrast."

"Oh, I love the sea, and I shall enjoy the trip; for I am never ill upon the water!" said Lucia, blithely.

The man's eyes rested on her sparkling face, and a shadow swept over his own, for he was not altogether hardened; and the thought of what she was really hastening to gave a twinge of remorse even to his conscience. He banished this unwelcome feeling by busying himself in getting ready to move forward again.

The words of Tomaso proved true, for in a short time they found themselves involved in a succession of mountain passes, which wound so abruptly between overhanging walls of rock as often to seem as if a sudden termination was put to further progress. But the vetturino moved slowly and surely, and Tomaso assured his charges that by sunset they would reach a house in which they could find rest and shelter for the night.

In a wild, romantic defile the driver suddenly halted, and, with a rueful expression, announced that one of his mules had fallen lame, and it would be impossible for him to drive much further over so rough and uneven a road.

Tomaso pretended to be exceedingly annoyed, and, after examining the condition of the animal's foot, he came to the side of the carriage, and said:

"It is, unfortunately, too true; the poor mule is not in a condition to proceed further. Luckily the vetturino has a friend in this neighbourhood, who, he says, will not refuse to give us shelter. He also thinks that from him he will be able to obtain a fresh animal to start with in the morning. We can walk the half mile that lies between this house and the house he spoke of, while he follows at his leisure with your box."

"There seems to be no other resource, and, of course, we must do so," said the nun, stepping a once from the vehicle, followed by Lucia, who said:

"I regret the detention, but I am glad to walk in place of being jolted over this rough road."

"That is right, daughter, make the best of the cross accidents of life," spoke the smooth voice of the seeming priest. "We will go at once to the place the driver has described to me so accurately that I shall not fail to recognize it."

"It's the only house you'll find on the way, so you can't mistake it," said the man, gruffly. "I will follow with your luggage, signorinas, and the holy father will answer for my honesty."

"Yes, daughters, I can do that, for the worthy Bartolo has been long known to me."

Thus assured of the safety of their few worldly goods, the two friends walked on with Tomaso, enjoying the wild grandeur of the mountain pass in which they found themselves. The beetling crags

"Then may the blessing of heaven rest upon the poor roof that has not refused shelter to those who needed it. Daughter, my business is with a holy woman known as Sister Maria, and with a young girl who is under her protection. I trust they are still to be found with you."

"They are here, father, and I will at once inform them of your arrival. Pray be seated, and make yourself welcome to all my house contains."

"Thank you, daughter, but I may not tarry in the performance of my errand. I was sent hither by a goodly gentleman who thought the calling of a messenger would give confidence to these unprotected women in the credentials I bear. Bring me to speech with them as soon as may be, if you please."

Rosella saw him comfortably seated, and then hastened to inform her guests that the long-expected messenger had arrived.

Lucia started up in a flutter of excitement, and a faint flush came into the cheek of Sister Maria, for she was sadly embarrassed to know whither she should turn for assistance if this hope failed them.

The three returned to the room in which the pretended priest sat. He arose, and greeted them with grave courtesy as he said:

"I am the bearer of a letter from Signor Strozzi to signorina Lucia Ganazzi, and this must be the lady to whom it is to be delivered."

He bowed over Lucia's hand, and placed in it a letter which he drew from a pouch at his side. She took it with trembling fingers, and breaking the seal, read the following words:

"Reggio, November 10, 18—.

"SIGNORINA GANAZZI:—I have been successful in my negotiation with Guerina, and I found his anxiety so great to secure your services that I almost named my own terms. Your salary will be as high as he has ever paid to any *prima donna*, and I have bargained that it shall be advanced quarterly."

"The enclosed agreement between us will show you what you have to expect, and it only requires your signature to become valid. The bearer of this, Father Ignacius, will advance to you such a sum as will defray your expenses hither, and if you will accept his escort, he will accompany you to Regio."

"I trust by this time that your friend has returned, and will accompany you hither. I have made arrangements to have you both received in a respectable family in which you can remain till you have time to look around you, and make permanent arrangements for a residence here."

"I anticipate a great triumph in your *début*, and I shall use my best efforts to promote its success. I owe this much to the memory of the late Marchesa of Chiasso, for she was a good friend to me at one time in my life, and I shall be glad to repay a portion of the debt I owe her to one in whom she took so deep an interest. Respectfully,

"B. STROZZI."

The paper enclosed in this purported to be an engagement on the part of Guerina to pay Lucia Ganazzi so large a sum for six months services as did stagger in his troops that the young girl's eyes opened wide with astonishment. She stammered:

"This—is this far more than I expected—than I supposed my singing would command—even after I had become known."

The priest smiled blandly.

"You are not apparently aware, my daughter, that the people of the world pay any price for that which ministers to their enjoyment. If your voice is as fine as represented, the sum now offered you is but a tithe of what you may command after you become celebrated. Signor Strozzi was enthusiastic in his praises, and the manager was only too happy to secure your services. For myself, I am at your command, though I could have wished that circumstances did not force on you the choice of such a profession."

"Thank you, father, but music is my only talent, and to gain my bread I must use such resources as have been given me."

"Right, my daughter; we are commanded to suffer no talent to lie idle; but if you had a vocation for a religious life, I could have placed both yourself and your friend in an asylum, in which you would have been safe from the snares that may beset your path in the career you are ambitious to enter on. You may choose now between the convent of Santa Rosa and the boards of the opera house. It was only on the condition that such a choice should be offered you that I consented to accept the mission which brought me hither."

Lucia slightly changed colour, and, after a pause, replied:

"I cannot thank you too deeply for the kind interest you take in my affairs, father; but I do not think I have any vocation for a conventual life. I prefer accepting the engagement at Reggio."

With an air of resigned disappointment the con-

demnate actor said:

"It is ever thus with the young and untried. The

holy peace that sanctifies the abodes of purity and devotion seems to them but deadly monotony. I will not attempt to combat your decision, daughter, for I plainly see that it springs from a distaste to the seclusion I offer you. I trust that in the time to come, you will never have cause to regret the decision of this hour."

"If I do, father, the blame will rest upon myself. I will endeavour to walk uprightly in the career I have chosen, and bring no reproach upon the holy church of which I am a most unworthy member."

"So be it, daughter. But perhaps your friend here may have some arguments to back mine, which may yet induce you to change your views. Her dress assures me that she is already a lay nun, and she may not object to render her vow perpetual."

He turned with an air of extreme deference to Sister Maria, and awaited her reply. She quietly said:

"Such is not my wish, father. I have found so much to do in the cause of humanity while wearing this dress, and using the freedom of action it gives me, that I should be unwilling to accept in exchange the quiet routine of duty in the walls of a convent. It is also my wish that Lucia shall enter on the career before her. I shall remain beside her to guard her from evil, and the good impulses within her will lead her to share her prosperity with those less fortunate than herself."

"I cannot cavil at your views, sister, for they are in accordance with all I have been told of you. To console the suffering and minister to their wants has been the employment of your life, and if you train this fair young creature to follow in your footsteps, you will, perhaps, do as good service to the cause of Christ as if you induced her to renounce all worldly aspirations."

The nun bowed to this flattering speech, but made no other reply, and the visitor turned again to Lucia, and asked:

"Will it be possible for you to set out for Reggio to-morrow, signorina? My time is brief, and so soon as I have attended to some important business which brings me to this neighbourhood I must set out on my return."

"I shall be quite ready to go at any hour that shall be most convenient to yourself, father. We have but few preparations to make, and if a conveyance can be obtained, we will set out in the morning."

"Leave that to me. Signor Strozzi commissioned me to make such arrangements as will be necessary toward your removal, and a yacht belonging to a friend of his will touch at a small fishing village on the coast, and remain there till we arrive."

"The signor is very kind," said Lucia, warmly, "and I am grateful to him for providing us with so respectable an escort as yourself."

He bowed, and after a little more conversation, in which he won still further upon their confidence, arose to take his leave. Rosella pressed on him such refreshment as her house afforded, but this he declined, and blessing them with much apparentunction, mounted his well-kept mule, and rode slowly away.

Lucia, in a transport of joy, threw herself into the arms of her friend, and exclaimed:

"I am happier than I ever hoped to be again. Oh! sister, this is a piece of rare good fortune to us. I began to fear that I should become a burden to you, my dearest friend. Now I shall soon be able to repay Rosella's kindness, and give her poor child a chance in the future. Yes—I am very happy, and most grateful that a way has been opened before me to use the talent I possess."

The nun tenderly caressed her, and replied:

"I, too, am deeply grateful, Lucia; for it seemed as if evil fortune was closing around us. But the light has dawned on the darkness, and I repent the rebellious doubts that began to arise within me. Providence must have sent Signor Strozzi to this door that he might hear you sing. The priest seems to be a courteous gentleman, though rather too much given to making flattering speeches."

"Ah, that is because he praised you; but, to my thinking, no one can say more than you deserve. If Father Ignacius only errs in that way, I, for one, shall readily forgive him."

Acute as Sister Maria was, she was completely deceived by the care with which the two confederates had managed their snare; and while she and Lucia joyfully prepared for their departure, Baldoni met the *soi-disant* priest at a point agreed on between them.

This person was no other than Tomaso, the confidential servant of Amalfi; and he himself had played the part of Signor Strozzi.

Even Lucia's youth and trustful innocence had not moved him from his purpose; and, in a subsequent interview with Baldoni, every detail of the plan was arranged which was to throw two helpless women entirely into the power of the unscrupulous steward.

almost met overhead, and the rocky fragments left by a mountain torrent long since dried, or diverted to some other outlet, formed the rude and uneven pathway.

The road wound upward for nearly half a mile, and then suddenly terminated in a plateau which commanded a wide view over the surrounding country. Mountains bathed in the mist, seemed piled against each other, with glimpses of fertile vales between, and in the distance loomed the monarch of all, Etna with its everlasting cloud of smoke rising as incense to the over-arching heavens.

Far away on the eastern side lay the sea glittering in the evening sunshine, and Lucia clasped her hands in ecstasy as she reverently said:

"How grand! how noble! In such a spot as this one almost feels the visible presence of the Creator."

Tomaso devoutly elevated his hands, and sustained his assumed character by chanting an anthem in a full, sonorous voice. Lucia caught the inspiration, and her clear soprano chimed in with his deep tones with an effect that was magnificent. The echoes caught up the vibrations, and wafted them from mountain-top to mountain-top, till the whole welkin seemed vocal with the delicious harmony. When the last note died away, the hypocrite turned to her with a smile, and said:

"I no longer wonder that Signor Guerina was so anxious to secure you. Your voice is truly wonderful, and you will surely become the most celebrated singer in the world."

She blushed vividly at such praise.

"Pray do not flatter me, father. I do not aspire to much distinction as that. I shall be perfectly contented to please the audience I find in Reggio, and I promise you that so soon as I have secured a moderate independence, I will give up the dangerous career against which you have so gravely warned me."

"That will be right, daughter, and I am happy to find that my words have not been uselessly spoken. Shall we go on now? The sun is getting low, and the evening air at this elevation you will find rather chilling."

Thus reminded of the necessity of proceeding, they walked slowly forward till the plateau was crossed; a ravine descended into a sheltered vale in which stood a peasant's cottage with a few outbuildings around it. The descent was rough, but it was soon accomplished, and the path lay through a grove of cork trees till they reached the enclosure around the house.

The place seemed kept in better order than is common among the husbandmen of Sicily, and a rough, healthy-looking man issued from the house; as the travellers entered the yard. He approached them, and politely said:

"A good even to you, friends. To what accident am I indebted for your visit, for strangers do not often find their way to this out-of-the-way place. My poor house will be honoured by the presence of a holy father and two good sisters."

This mistake was natural, for Lucia wore the black serge dress and hood procured for her by the nun when she left Colonna. Tomaso hastened to explain what had occurred, and to ask a shelter in the name of Bartolo, who, he assured him, would soon make his appearance.

"He is a very good friend of mine," replied the peasant, "and often stops on his journeys to spend a few hours with me. Walk in, signorinas, and make yourselves at home. I have no women about, but I can manage to give you something to eat, and some good wine to drink."

The room into which he ushered them was meagrely furnished, and pointing to a door opening from it, the host said:

"You will find a bed in that chamber which you can use to-night, signorinas. I can give the father a truce of straw, and that is the best I can do towards sleeping accommodations; but you shall have little cause to complain of anything else."

"We shall not be likely to complain," replied Sister Maria, with a smile. "We are only too much indebted to you for your hospitality. But Father Ignacius will make a return for that."

"Let him give me his blessing, sister, that is all I will accept," was the devout response, while a singular gleam from his dark eyes fell on the long beard, and clerical garb of the disguised Tomaso.

Lucia caught the expression, and for a moment felt some alarm lest he should not be as friendly toward their protector as his words seemed to imply, but her passing doubt was soon set at rest by his cordial manner and pleasant words.

"I must bestir myself," he went on, "and hasten to give you something to eat, for this mountain air sharpens the appetite wonderfully, and you have had a bit of a walk from the lower pass. Bartolo will be here anon, and the fellow is always ready to devour anything that is set before him."

The nun offered to assist him in his ordinary preparations, but this he declined, though he permitted

Tomaso to accompany him into a back apartment, where their voices were soon heard in low, eager consultation.

Lucia had not yet quite regained her strength, and she was glad to enter the chamber, and repose upon the bed while the supper was preparing. A vague sense of uneasiness, for which she could not account, began to creep over Sister Maria, and she made several efforts to distinguish what was passing between the two men in the kitchen. She could hear nothing but the subdued murmur of their voices, and at length she walked out to see if there were any indications of the approach of Bartolo.

After a few moments she heard his voice chanting in the distance, as he led forward his disabled team, and she returned to the cottage, endeavouring to reason herself out of her fears.

Tomaso had acted his part so consummately that she was completely deceived by the appearance of sanctity he assumed; her only suspicion was that he had been decoyed into a dangerous position by his confidence in the vetturino.

On returning, she found that their host had spread a table in the front room, on which was placed roasted chestnuts, fruit, a loaf of black bread, and two bottles of wine. He cheerfully said:

"The cheer is not very luxurious, sister, but I have done the best I could for you, and the wine is a good vintage. This bottle is light and sweet, and it will not affect your head, or the signorina's. The men will drink from the stronger kind."

"Thank you, we need but little, and your preparations are amply sufficient for our wants."

"Then I am satisfied, for I was afraid such guests as you would find it hard to put up with our lenten fare. Here comes Bartolo, just in time to take his share."

Lucia was summoned by her friend to partake of the repast, and the four gathered round the table. Two brimming cups were filled with the pale, yellow wine, and pressed upon the ladies, while the men served themselves from the red vintage in the other bottle. This did not excite any suspicion, for Sister Maria saw that the wine offered to them was much lighter in quality than that offered to their companions; and she supposed they preferred a stronger beverage than she or Lucia would care to taste.

Wearied by the day's travel, the sweet, mild liquid offered them was most refreshing and acceptable; and they drank from their cups without a suspicion that the wine might be drugged, till a confused feeling in Lucia's head caused her to decline having an additional supply poured out for her. After struggling vainly against this, she faintly said:

"I feel strangely dizzy and uncomfortable. Help me to reach the bed, if you please, sister, for I am afraid I am becoming ill again."

The nun arose in some alarm, and passing her arm around the half-sinking form of Lucia, almost bore her into the adjoining bed-room. She sank upon the couch, and after a few moments seemed to lie in a state of perfect immobility.

By this time the drug had begun to affect the stronger frame of Sister Maria; and, in agony of fear, she called out to Father Ignacius to come to their assistance.

Tomaso appeared at the open doorway, accompanied by the host, and the next instant she felt a pungent essence applied to her nostrils; the subtle vapour destroyed senses and motion, and she fell forward, helpless. A handkerchief, saturated with the same benumbing fluid, was then pressed an instant over the lips of Lucia, and Tomaso tore off his cassock and false beard as he said:

"They are safe enough now, and Baldoni may come in. The drugged wine they have taken will keep them asleep at least fifteen hours, and he can remove them at his leisure."

The vetturino went to the door, uttered a peculiar cry, and in another moment the steward issued from one of the outhouses, in which he had lain concealed till the time for his appearance arrived.

Bartolo hastened to harness fresh mules to his calèche, and in a short time it was in readiness to return over the road it had so lately traversed. Some straw was thrown in the bottom of the vehicle, over which a few bed-clothes were spread, and the rigid and helpless forms of the nun and her young friend were placed upon them.

Tomaso assumed the place of the vetturino, who was commanded to come to the steward's cottage on the following day to reclaim his calèche, and receive the reward of his treachery.

After exchanging a few words with the host, which seemed very satisfactory to him, Baldoni took his place beside his colleagues in crime, and they drove away.

When they gained the open road, he turned toward Tomaso, and asked:

"Have you discovered how it is that this girl's father has not yet made his appearance in Sicily?"

"I have, or I could not have aided you in this affair. The ship on which he embarked was wrecked, and every soul on board, save one sailor, perished. He was picked up in a senseless condition, bound to a plank, and has made his way to Palermo. You was lucky for somebody that shall be named, wasn't it?"

"Hem—rather so, I should say. And his money? Did that go down, too?"

"No—the best of it is that it has been transmitted to Palermo in bills of exchange, and my master has proof that it was the property of his nearest kinsman. Of course he will claim, and get the whole of it."

Baldoni turned a piercing glance on him, and asked:

"Are you sure this is true, Tomaso? I remember of old that you were always given to romancing."

"Ah! that was in my young days, Baldy; but I've learned better since then. A man's reputation for truth is worth something to him, if he only knows how to play his cards well. You and I hold the trumps now, and it will be our own fault if we do not make a fortune out of this little affair."

"Which means that we must fleece the marquise out of all we possibly can. Well—I'll not say nay to that, for noblemen that want secret service like this must expect to pay high for it."

After a pause, Tomaso inquired:

"What are you going to do with that girl?" and he cast a backward glance at the white face of Lucia as it lay against the black hood which had fallen from her head.

"I shall keep her in a secret place known to myself alone till she consents to take the veil, after solemnly swearing never to divulge the incidents of this night."

"Hum—suppose she refuses to do that, what will you do then?"

A black frown gathered on the brow of the steward, and for a few moments he was silent. He presently said:

"Then I shall consider what is best to be done with her. But one thing is certain: She never shall see the light of the sun again unless it is quite safe for us all to permit her to leave the seclusion in which I shall place her. You may feel perfectly sure, reverend Father Ignacius, that the part you have ably played shall never become known through her imprudence."

"So much the better for us both; but really the girl is very pretty, and she has a magnificent voice. It seems a pity, but we have no choice. I should have preferred striking at the old man, but that we spared me by fate itself, and when my master sent me on this service, nothing but the allegiance I owe him induced me to undertake it. I'm glad that I'm not to be his jailer, for I'm afraid my heart might melt some day, and make me ruin myself for her sake."

The lip of Baldoni curled with contemptuous incredulity.

"You'll never ruin your own fortune for thousands of another, Tomaso. You are subject to little impulses of generosity and feeling, but you are very careful not to act on any of them. They are too short-lived for any such nonsense as that."

"So much the better for me," replied Tomaso, shrugging his shoulders, and laughing lightly. "A poor devil who has his own way to fight through the world has no business to indulge in such luxuries. How far must we travel before the end of our journey is gained?"

"Oh, it will be late in the night before we get to the place to which we're bound, and after dipping of our involuntary passengers, you will have to go home with me, I suppose."

"Not a very cordial manner of inviting me to share your hospitality, I must say; but I pass it over, as my visit will enable me to see the fair Popa once more. Is she as beautiful as her children promised?"

"You can soon judge for yourself," was the cool response. "What I think of my daughter's charms may not be endorsed by others."

There was a long interval of silence, which was broken by Tomaso.

"Do you know, Baldy, that I am thinking of settling in life—of getting a nice house for myself, for which, of course, I shall want a mistress. The marquise is going to France to join his daughter, and I do not care to leave Sicily. Our interests are already bound together, and if Popa is but half as fair as she promised to be, I shall be glad to make myself acceptable to her."

An exclamation of contemptuous surprise escaped the steward, and he said:

"You? Ma! ha! Popa looks even as high as your master. The girl is proud as Jane herself, and has already refused better men than you are. But if you choose to try your fortune with her, I will not refuse my consent, provided you can win her."

Baldoni collected himself in time, and added a few words to soften the effect of the first.

Tonio replied with strong sarcastic emphasis:

"So the steward's daughter aspires, does she? What at such high game as noblemen? If she cherishes such hopes, I am surprised that she permitted such hopes. I am surprised that she permitted the young count to escape her. He was young enough to be easily entrapped by a handsome and ambitious girl, and she must have had opportunities enough to win him if she wished to do so."

"Pytha regards Vittorio as a brother," replied the latter, quietly. "Whatever her aspirations may be, they did not point in that direction. We will not further discuss my daughter, if you please. You can take your chance among her suitors, if you choose to do so; so let that suffice."

The two sank into silence, and several hours passed in rambling over the rough road. As the sun sank behind the mountain-tops, the moon rose, and imperfectly lighted the gloomy defiles through which they were winding. The two helpless passengers lay perfectly still, steeped in a sleep so deep as almost to resemble death. Alas! for their awakening!

(To be continued.)

GEORGIAN WOMEN.—Kutais is famous among all the Georgian provinces for the beauty of its women, and a woman seems to merit its reputation. Dressed in their becoming native costume, the women and girls sit out in the evenings before their doors, on the balconies, and on the flat roofs of their houses; and it really would be difficult to find a plain-looking one among them. Their features are regular; their eyes, eyes, eyebrows, and hair are always of the same colour—a rich, deep, clear brown; and they are adorned with that grace in walking which, in Europe, is said to be the peculiar gift of the Spanish women. — *A Journey from London to Persepolis.* By John Usher, F.R.G.S.

JEWELLED LADIES.—Not, however, at the English table will you see the jewelled glory of the Roman ladies. The Roman princesses, blazing with diamonds, in their well worn settings, and should you have a reason for these things you may gratify it by studying one of the great charity balls which the high Roman families patronize. You may also see them at the receptions of the ambassadors, which are given to all attired in proper costume. At one of them given by the French Ambassador, there sat, among the greater part of the evening, six ladies, side by side, literally encased in diamonds—diamonds, which shined from their heads, which seemed radiant with a star-like glory; there was a fascination in the brilliancy, though the eyes ached from the splendour. The possessors of these gems were Roman princesses, in whose families the jewels have been preserved for many centuries. — *Last Winter in Rome.* By Charles R. Weld.

WIZARDRY OF OLD.—The raising of ghosts was a favorite exploit of the necromancers of old; the son of Torralva, the Spanish magician, has been immortalized in Don Quixote. The demons that the celebrated Italian artist, Benvenuto Cellini, describes as having been seen when he got within the conjuror's den, and which amazement magnified into several legions, are now believed to have been merely figures painted by a magic lantern; and their appearing in a atmosphere of perfumes is accounted for by the burning of odoriferous woods, in order to dim the view of the spectators. When the Emperor Charles IV. was married to the Bavarian Princess Sophia, in the city of Prague, the father of the bride brought with him a wagon load of magicians to assist in the festivities. Two of the chief proficient in the part—Zyho, the Bohemian sorcerer, and Guion, the Bavarian—appeared as rivals in an extraordinary trial before a summoned assembly. After superhuman efforts to astonish, Zyho opened his jaws from ear to ear, and swallowed his companion until his teeth touched his nose, which he spat out because he said they had not been closed. The admiration of the audience was increased by feelings of horror, but Zyho calmed their apprehensions by restoring the vanquished Guion to his perfect corporeal proportions to life—a triumph of art inexpressible.

THE CASTLE OF BIRLA.—It was built in its present position by the advice of a slave, a prisoner of war, contrary to the opinions of the military engineers in the army which the great sultan was then leading to battle against the Persians, and who all expressed very differing ideas as to the strength and defensibility of the fortress erected by the captive architect. The latter, however, on finding his work thus condemned and ridiculed, contrived to procure his own nomination as governor, and having established himself firmly, and engaged a garrison on whom he could depend, put the vexed question as to the strength of the castle to the proof, by revolting against the sultan himself, and setting his authority at defiance. A large body of troops were sent against him, who for some time besieged the stronghold, but to no purpose, their

assaults being repulsed and their utmost efforts set at naught by the impregnable character of the defences. At last, when the sultan's troops had acknowledged their defeat by withdrawing from before the walls, and abandoning the siege, the governor himself repaired alone and unattended to the sultan, and obtaining audience under a feigned name and pretext, threw himself at his feet, and declaring that he had acted as he had done only to prove the correctness of his own idea as to the position selected for the fortress, was pardoned and advanced to further honours. — *A Journey from London to Persepolis.* By John Usher, F.R.G.S.

ROSA FRANKLIN'S LOVERS.

"ADIEU, m'amie—I shall be miserable until I meet you once again, at the *déjeuner*, to-morrow afternoon."

And the Baron Montagner bowed gracefully over Rosa Franklin's plump little hand, and took his aristocratic departure, leaving behind him a strong general impression of diamonds, attar of roses, and blue-black curls.

"Oh, isn't he a darling love of a man," sighed Rosa, drawing a deep breath. Did you see the coat of arms on his pocket handkerchief, Cecilia?"

No, Cecilia had not seen it; but then Cecilia had scarcely lifted the drooping lashes of her soft eyes the whole time the baron had been present.

"And then, how beautiful his hair ripples—and what an interesting, broken accent there is in his conversation! Oh, Philip! don't you think you could get him a card to go to your aunt's masquerade?"

Philip Netley looked up from the book of engravings he was holding upside down, and affecting to scrutinize with intense interest.

"I shall not try, Rosa."

"Not try!" repeated Rosa, in some surprise, not unmixed with indignation. "Not try, Mr. Netley?"

Now Rosa Franklin was a tall, pretty girl, with brilliant hazel eyes, that seemed to melt and deepen in the faintness of their light, and cheeks red and round as lady-apples; and moreover, Mr. Netley was very much in love with her, so that you see it required considerable moral courage to sustain the glance she cast at him. But Philip Netley did not quail.

"I must be better satisfied as to his antecedents as a gentleman, Rosa, before I introduce him into the society of my aunt and cousins."

"His antecedents? I am sure I cannot imagine what you mean, Philip. He has unfortunately allowed himself to become involved in a conspiracy to overthrow the despotic rule of Louis Napoleon and restore a republican government to France, and so he was compelled abruptly to leave his beloved country; but he hopes that influences are at work that may recall him to his home before long. Oh, Philip, you should hear him talk of his beautiful chateau in Normandy, with its marble terraces and old ancestral woods. I have seen the tears come to his eyes, as he talked of the corridors and battlements of that grand old Montagner chateau."

Philip Netley brought down his closed hand with some emphasis on the book of engravings.

"And what authority have you for all this, Rosa?"

"Authority! why—he told me himself."

"Oh, he did? And did he mention the family diamond mines, or the solid gold pavements that belonged to his chateau in *espagne*?"

"Now you are laughing at me, Philip," said Rosa, evidently beginning to lose her temper.

"Not at all. I think one story quite as possible as the other. Rosa, I don't believe he is a baron any more than your milkman is."

"Mr. Netley," said Rosa, colouring high, "I can only attribute this very extraordinary conduct on your part to a spirit of envy."

"But, Rosa, only look at the improbability of the thing—only consider—"

"The Baron Montagner moves in the very first circles of society, sir."

"He will move out of them with considerable celerity one of these days, I apprehend, for—"

"Mr. Netley!" interrupted Rosa, indignantly, "I must warn you against the repetition of this offence. You seem to forget that the Baron Montagner is my friend, and if you cannot treat him with the consideration due to his exiled condition and chivalric birth, I really must request you to abstain from further visits here."

Philip Netley bit his lip.

"You must choose between my friendship and his, then, Rosa."

She was silent, but the glow on her cheek and sparkle in her eye were most eloquent.

"Rosa," he urged, "you surely will not cast aside the friendship of years for the passing attention of one whose character is more than doubtful?"

Rosa flamed up instantly.

"This is too much, Mr. Netley. I have borne a great deal from you, but I will endure nothing farther. I certainly shall not sacrifice the Baron Montagner's friendship to a mere whim of yours."

Philip Netley bowed his head coldly; but Cecilia Franklin saw that his face was pale and rigid.

"Rosa!—sister!" she pleaded softly; but Rosa did not stay to hear farther—she walked out of the room, with her pretty head high in the air.

"Never mind, Cecy," said Philip, gently. "She has made up her mind—I can only hope that she will not regret it. Why, Cecy, you are crying!"

"I cannot help it," faltered Cecilia. "Rosa is so unkind to you."

And Philip Netley, soothing the almost hysterical emotion of the shy little creature, wondered that he had never before noticed how very pretty her blue eyes were.

"How do you like these gold leaves, Cecy? Don't you think they would look prettily in my hair to-morrow with two or three white roses?"

Cecilia took up the gold-frosted leaves and looked at them mechanically.

"They are very pretty, Rosa. But where are you going?"

"To the theatre, of course."

"With Philip?"

"Philip, indeed! Certainly not," said Rosa, tossing her head. "Baron Montagner has invited me."

"Sister," said Cecilia, blushing and trembling at her own unparalleled boldness, "are you sure it is prudent for you to go out so much with Baron Montagner?"

"Nonsense!" ejaculated Rosa. "Now you have become infected with Philip Netley's absurd ideas. Philip is jealous of the baron—that's just the truth of the matter. Philip has always been accustomed to consider himself the best match in society, and does not like to find that Baron Montagner attracts more attention among the ladies than his elegant self."

"But, Rosa, Philip is so kind—so noble."

"Very possibly; but, after all, Philip is only a private citizen, while the baron wears the insignia of nobility. And you must acknowledge, Cecy, that it is better to be mistress of a real chateau than a plain house."

"Rosa!" ejaculated the horror-stricken Cecilia, "surely, surely you never would marry him?"

Rosa laughed, and bent over to kiss her sister's burning cheek.

"Would it be so terrible to have a baroness for a sister?"

"No, but are you really in earnest, Rosa?"

"I don't know whether I am or not, Cecy—time will show. He's very handsome, isn't he?"

"Yes—but there is something in his eye that I am almost afraid of, Rosa."

"And then his diamonds," pursued Rosa, enthusiastically, "and the aristocratic air with which he enters a room. Oh, Cecy, people may talk as much republicanism as they please, but there is something in noble blood and high descent."

"I don't think he is any more aristocratic-looking than Philip."

"Philip again! Take care, Cecy! I think there is some danger of your falling in love with my discarded beau. There, there, child, don't blush so—of course I know Philip wouldn't care for a little bit of a creature like you."

Cecilia blushed subsided into a meek sigh as she admitted the truth of her sister's assertion.

"And now, Cecy," went on Rosa, "I want you to go with me to get those artificial roses—it won't take long."

"But, Rosa," faltered Cecilia, "Philip is coming to take me to ride to-day."

"Very well—I'll go with you," said Rosa, indifferently. "Philip would just as soon drive round by Madame Latourette's as not."

Cecilia did not feel altogether certain on that score, but she said nothing. Rosa's will had always overborne hers, during the eighteen years of her innocent little life, and it was rather late to contemplate a rebellion.

"If you please, Miss Cecy, Mr. Netley is downstairs," said the trim servant maid, tapping at the door. And Cecilia went down, hesitating what to say.

"Well, Cecy, are you ready?" asked Philip, with an admiring glance at the little lassie's blue eyes and rose-tinted cheeks. "Yes—she was very pretty—almost as pretty as Rosa," was the thought that passed through his brain as she advanced timidly into the room.

"Yes, Philip; but—"

"Well?"

"Rosa wants to go to Madame Latourette's—would you be kind enough to drive round in that direction?"

Philip's lip curved a little sarcastically.

"I shall be most happy to become a convenience to Miss Rosa."

When Rosa Franklin entered the apartment, however, all in a flutter of cherry plumes and bright ribbons, she never observed the studied coldness of Philip Netley, once all devotion; she was wondering whether the Baron Montagner would most appreciate her blue or the white brocade, with clusters of scarlet wheat straws all over its glistening expanse.

"I think, on the whole, I prefer the blue," she said, aloud, as Philip handed her into the carriage.

Cecilia's forehead became suffused at once.

"Rosa, Rosa, Philip asked you what street Madame Latourette's was in."

The cherry plumes were scarcely deeper in their tint than Rosa's cheek.

"I beg your pardon—I was thinking of something else. It's in Park Street."

Rosa Franklin was a woman—every inch of her; and in spite of her allegiance to the Baron Montagner, it did pique her a little to observe how very attentive Philip Netley was to her sister.

"Of course it's all over between him and me," she pondered, uneasily twisting the chain of her little purse; "but then I don't think he should have got over the repulse so very soon! His feelings are not of the same deep, delicate nature as Baron Montagner's. Oh, if I—little Rosa Franklin—should ever dwell beneath the ancestral shadow of a real castle, it would be almost like a fairy tale. Yet that must have been what he meant, when he said it would be such misery to be back alone to his Normandy home, and pressed his hand with such a tender emphasis. La Baronne Adolphe de Montagner—how I could queen it over the other girls in our set!"

Rosa tossed her head unconsciously, as if the weight of the Montagner family diamonds already pressed her curls.

"What is the matter?" she asked, suddenly rousing from her day-dream, as the carriage came to an abrupt pause.

But as he was guiding his horses round the corner of a narrow and obscure street, the fiery steeds started to one side, taking fright, and rushed forward at a mad gallop. Rosa screamed convulsively—Cecilia clung to the side of the carriage with a face pale as ashes. But the danger was only momentary. Philip Netley's practised eye and strong hand were quite sufficient to meet the emergency.

"Were you very much frightened, Cecy?" he said, tenderly, as the panting horses were drawn up. "The peril is over now, but I think the shafts are scarcely safe to drive home. They received one or two awkward wrenches turning that corner, and I don't like to risk the matter."

He surveyed the harness a moment critically.

"Miss Rosa, you and Cecy must alight, and take temporary refuge in yonder shop, while I ascertain what can be done."

Rosa, still pale and trembling, suffered herself to be led across the street to a little shoe shop, where a Jewish-looking woman was standing at the door, with a face of curiosity.

"Will you allow these ladies to remain here until I can bring back the carriage for them?" asked Mr. Netley, politely. "We are some distance from home, and—"

"Certainly, sir; walk in, ladies," said the woman, bringing forward two wooden chairs for the accommodation of her unexpected guests.

But Rosa and Cecy, in no way prepossessed by the dirty floor, smoke-begrimed walls, and poisonous atmosphere of the close little hole, preferred to stand, with their skirts drawn as closely around them as possible; and the female, after staring a moment or two at them, withdrew into some inner room, whence proceeded a strong odour of tobacco. From the same apartment Rosa could plainly discern the loud and discordant voices of men, talking and laughing in no very gentle key, while now and then an oath was distinctly audible.

"Oh, Cecy, I am so afraid! I wish Philip would return," whispered Rosa, drawing closer to her sister. "These are such dreadful men!"

"Hush! we are quite safe," returned Cecilia, although there was not a vestige of colour in her cheek.

"They are talking about us, Cecy—I am sure they are!" faltered Rosa. "Had we not better run away?"

Through a peal of boisterous laughter, Cecilia heard a coarse voice rising higher than the rest:

"Ladies, eh? why didn't you say so before, Mother Jacobs? I'll have a peep at 'em, or I'll know the reason why."

"You sit still, Jack Higge, or I'll call the old man!" ejaculated the female voice. "You hain't half-earned your salt since you took to playin' fine gentleman. Them shoes has got to be done afore dark—you've wasted quite time enough, drinkin' gin and puttin' that ere dye stuff on your head, a'ready."

"Don't be snarly, Mother Jacobs!" pleaded the masculine accent. "Wait till I've made my fortune—then I'll buy all my boots and shoes here—see if I don't!"

"Your fortune!" mimicked the woman. "Gammon! you hadn't better try to come that game over me, Jack Higge. How many week's wages are you behindhand now! I'd be a shoemaker or a gentleman, one or t'other, not a make-believe o' both."

"Would you?" muttered the man, sulkily.

Rosa and Cecilia looked at each other with rising colour, as the colloquy proceeded, but Cecilia was the first to break silence.

"The Baron Montagner!"

"Nonsense, Cecy?" whispered Rosa, indignantly.

"It is impossible—the Baron Montagner in a dirty little den like this!"

But the doubt was soon dissipated.

"There goes the cross old hag up-stairs," resumes the voice that was so suspiciously like Baron Montagner's silver accents. "Now I'll have a look at the fine folks, if I die for it."

A coarse checked curtain drawn across the glazed sash of a door, was jerked away, giving a full view of a tall figure, girt about with a shoemaker's apron.

Rosa caught convulsively at her sister's arm, for there, wielding a last in one hand, and a shoe-hammer in the other, his blue black curls hanging in rusty tangles over his face, and his aristocratic countenance unmistakeably dirty, appeared no less a personage than the Baron Montagner.

"The deuce!" broke involuntarily from the illustrious exile's lips, as he stumbled backwards into the obscurity whence he had come, knocking over a bench in his retreat.

And Cecilia Franklin, in the midst of her terror and sympathy for Rosa, burst into a peal of unavoidable laughter:

"Oh, Rosa, and this is the Norman chateau!"

But she checked her merriment the next instant, for Rosa was sobbing on her shoulder.

"Why Rosa—Cecy—what's the matter?" demanded Philip Netley's voice. "Hav'n't you recovered from your fright yet?"

"Don't speak to her, Philip; she was very much terrified," said judicious little Cecy.

And so they drove home, and with every revolution of the wheels the colonnades and terraces of the Montagner chateau grew dimmer and more faint, until it faded into mere baseless vapour in the throbbing brain of poor Rosa Franklin.

She was lying on the sofa in her room that night, when Cecilia crept softly to her side.

"Well, Cecy, what is it?"

For Rosa read some important communication in the drooping lids and cheek that were so close to her own.

"Rosa, you won't be angry? Philip Netley has asked me to become his wife?"

"And you?"

"I love him, sister!"

Rosa closed her eyes in mute despair. Baron Montagner was a myth—and Philip Netley's love had been transferred to her little school-girl sister.

It had been a dream of folly, but Rosa Franklin had paid dearly for this transitory delusion.

The Baron never resumed his attentions after the incident that had so abruptly betrayed him in his true colours. Marrying the pretty heiress was decidedly out of the question now, and probably he considered the wisdom of the golden adage, that bids the shoe-maker stick to his last!

A. R.

THE FRENCH INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION is decidedly fixed to take place in 1887. Thus far the Champ de Mars appears to have a chance of being selected for the site, as the present Palace of Industry does not offer space sufficient. The cost is estimated at 18,000,000*fr.*, of which one-third would be raised by subscription, one-third furnished by the city of Paris, and one-third by the State. The receipts are to be employed in reimbursing—first, the subscribers, next, the city of Paris, and, thirdly, the State. According to the lowest calculation, the money received will amount to 10,000,000*fr.*

CAGED SPARROWS.—Mr. Edward Morton, writing to the *Field*, relates the following:—"At the house of Lady Soame, in Hereford Square, Brompton, is a Corinthian column reaching to the top, in the capital of which, as long ago as last spring, a pair of sparrows built their nest. About the time the young birds were hatched Lady Soame had a cage or covering of wirework placed over the capital, one top of which came under the nest, and it happened that shortly afterwards two of the young birds fell through. The meshes or openings of the cage were just large enough to admit them as they then were, but not the old ones; and as they had not strength, probably, to force their way out as they came in, there they had to remain. The consequence was that, in their progress to

maturity, they also became too large to pass through their prison bars, and there they have remained imprisoned, but alive, from that day to this. The most extraordinary part of the story is that the old birds not only continued to feed the young ones through the wires of the cage while they remained undeveloped, but they have done so ever since. They have been seen from day to day to bring them food; indeed, had they not done so, it is plain the young ones could not have been, as they now are, alive, and, to all appearance, well."

THE KING OF DAHOMEY.

IN the king's presence, where he sits in the deep shade of a sort of barn-gate, there is a circle of white sand for those who approach to rub their faces in. His Majesty King Gelele, son of King Gann, is a northern slave girl or a mulatto from the French factory at Whydah, is over six feet, well made, except the cucumber shaped shin, and several shades lighter than his courtiers. He is about forty-five years old, slightly bald, with peppercorn hair, generally close shaven, scanty eyebrows, thin beard, thin moustache, a square jaw, red bearded eyes, and a turned-up nose, "looking, in fact, as if all the time had been turned the wrong way," but not much flattened, and not wholly without a bridge. He is strongly pock-marked, and has the Dahomean nose in three short parallel and perpendicular lines between the scalp and the eyebrows. He dresses simply, is often bare-headed, wears a single human tooth and blue bead attached to a thread, as an ornament and bofetish against sickness, preference to silver arm-rings, wore at Kana a white body-dress of plain fine stuff, with a narrow edging of warm green silk, over draws of purple flowered silk that hardly reached to mid-thigh. His Moslem mantle were of gold-embroidered scarlet, and he smoked detestable tobacco.

A throng of royal spouses stood behind, to wipe off instantly any drop of perspiration from the royal face, to hold the spittoon immediately when the royal mouth indicated a disposition to spit, and all ready to rub the grounds with their foreheads whenever His Majesty sneezed. When his Majesty drinks, a vulgar eye must see him do anything so ignominious; he wheels suddenly round to them, with his back to the court; the wives hide him from view with umbrellas; drums beat, distracting noises of all kinds are made, and all heads are averted, or the courtiers, if standing, dance like bears, or paddle their hands like the fore-feet of a swimming dog. Amongst some tribes in the Congo country the chief's big toes are pulled when he drinks.

Protected and not checked by all such ceremonies, a king of Dahomey is a long-lived animal. Eight successive kings of the present dynasty have occupied the throne during two hundred and fifty-two years. "Thus," says Captain Burton, "rivalled the great Roman monarchs whose rule extended over nearly the same period, and had caused them to be held fabulous or typical."

The flower of the host brought forward to give this reception was the mixed company of about two hundred amazons lately raised by the king. The whole court did not show a gathering of more than a thousand. Some, however, were away, attacking a village; all who were there expressed in oration, song, and shout, and dance, determination to fight terribly with the Abokutans, against whom a great expedition was intended. It has since turned out that the Dahomeans were very seriously worsted in that expedition.

Three skulls of conquered chiefs, in various typical settings, were brought out as a part of the more solemn paraphernalia of Dahomean royalty. One, for example, was the skull of a neighbouring chief, who, on the death of Gezo, Gelele's father, sent word that all men were now truly joyful, that the sea had dried up, and that the world had seen the bottom of Dahomey. He was attacked and killed, and his skull, boiled beautifully white and polished, is mounted on a ship of this brass, a foot long. There is always water enough in Dahomey to float it, with the mockers skull for freight, is the grim jest intended. These skulls are without the lower jaw.

The lower jaw of an enemy is prized in Dahomey for umbrellas, sword-handles, and other purposes. It is out and torn with horrible cruelty out of the face of the still living victim.

In the presence of his Majesty the highest courtiers of Dahomey lie on their sides, and at times roll over on their bellies, or relieve themselves by standing on all fours.

The king speaks to his subjects through an official called the *Meu*, to whom his word is carried on all fours by a ceremonious middle-aged lady, called the *Dakoo*; she comes back also on all fours with any answer that may be intended for the royal ear.



[THE ANTIDOTE.]

ALETHE.

CHAPTER IX.

AL KAVANAGH awoke on the morrow following Alethe's secret journey with a severe pain in his wounded arm. Since the first dressing by Hyderabad he had suffered comparatively little; his applications having exerted a very soothing and healing influence. Major Rainbold came in to make his morning visit, and, to his surprise, a change in the young man's appearance. His face was flushed, and he tossed restfully on his bed. Thinking the bandage might be too tightly drawn, he loosened it; but the relief was temporary.

"The arm is much swollen," said the major, "and the fingers are puffed out like lumps of dough. I can't account for it; and, in fact, I can't account for anything that takes place in this house lately. I've lived many years in this country, and never was annoyed by a Thug before, nor had a tiger enter my private grounds. But I suppose strange things must happen occasionally. Then there are Melicent and Bracegirdle playing at some kind of cross-purpose that I can't understand. He seems a proper young fellow, but that handsome jade of mine treats him with the greatest coolness. He mopes about, muttering and looking as grim as a land-pirate; and my lady scarcely seems conscious of his existence. But you get attention, my lad, I must confess. It's a mighty fine thing to be bitten by a tiger, eh?"

Major Rainbold shrugged his shoulders. Melicent and Ida entered the chamber, attended by Alethe.

Nail Kavanagh for a moment forgot his pain. The presence of Ida Macgregor sufficed for a brief season to divert his mind from the new and strange symptoms that had appeared.

"Miss Rainbold," said Ida, "has thought lightly of physical courage till within a few days. She is now ready to appreciate any act of prowess, from the storming of a battery to the slaying of a tiger."

"Miss Macgregor, Mr. Kavanagh," retorted Melicent colouring, "has been making herself very disagreeable for the last few days; and if you are as potent with young ladies as with Thugs and tigers, I entreat you to subdue her malignancy, and make her a little more companionable."

"My powers, Miss Rainbold, are exceedingly limited, and I regret to say do not extend to so exalted a being as Miss Macgregor."

Having projected this terrible shell from the mortar of his brain, Kavanagh was reminded of his extreme earthiness by a dreadful twinge in his arm.

The major laughed.

"That's what I call sharp shooting!" he exclaimed. "How, in heaven's name, do you suppose the boy is going to get well if you make such drafts on his ingenuity? By Jove, girl, if you draw his fire in that way, he won't have ammunition enough to maintain the citadel of life three days!"

"Exalted being," said Melicent, turning to Ida with a toss of the head, and a mocking smile, "it is yours to answer this very clever thing from the lieutenant."

"If you look closely at Mr. Kavanagh," replied Ida, approaching him, "you will see that his arm is giving him great uneasiness."

Alethe stepped forward very quickly, and looked at him. There was a visible change in her manner.

"Miss Ida is right," she said. "He is very ill."

"What do you know of illness, child?" interrupted Melicent.

"I know enough, my mistress, to perceive that the sahib is in great danger," answered the girl, stepping still nearer the couch, and adjusting the pillows.

While doing this, and while the major was again inspecting the arm, and calling the attention of the young ladies to its swollen condition, she said to Kavanagh, in a low tone:

"You did not follow my instructions. Your arm has been dressed by Hyderabad since I last saw you."

"You are mistaken, my young friend. To my knowledge, Hyderabad has not been in the room since you left me last night," replied Kavanagh. "But I have slept profoundly—unnaturally, I think."

"Ah! that accounts for it," said Alethe, quickly. "You have been under the influence of a drug, and a score of persons might have entered your chamber without waking you."

"Girl," said Melicent, "don't weary Mr. Kavanagh with your observations. It seems an effort for him to speak."

"His arm must be attended to," retorted the major, bustling about. "Where is that humbug, Hyderabad? Ah! here he comes. Look here, you root-and-berb ma. Your patient is bad enough. His arm's as large as a six-pound cannon. It's my notion that you're no doctor, Doctor Hyderabad! Bracegirdle, come in."

The concluding words were addressed to Raynor, who, for some reason, had followed Hyderabad to Kavanagh's apartment. On seeing so many persons present, he was disconcerted, not knowing whether to advance or retreat. The major's words decided him, and he came in, while Hyderabad advanced, with an air of mingled respect and confidence, to the bedside of his patient.

Alethe placed herself where she could watch the play of his features.

"A little fever has set in during the night," said he.

Kavanagh kept his eyes fixed steadily on those of the native. He saw that Ida Macgregor had more than once fancied that she had seen something familiar in that yellow visage. What was it? Ida had asked that question. Kavanagh now asked it. Was it the voice that so frequently startled him? Was it the eyes, or the teeth, or the mouth? He could not tell.

Ida stood at the foot of the bed, observing the countenances of each.

"The arm," added Hyderabad, "has imprudently been exposed to a draught of cold air, and you behold here the effects of the exposure."

Kavanagh suffered his gaze to wander for an instant to Alethe. There was doubt, fear, hope, and entreaty in that glance. Hyderabad was baring the arm, and did not see the mute language of this look; but it did not escape the penetration of Ida and the jealous watchfulness of Melicent.

The wound was frightfully inflamed. All save the doctor beheld the arm with surprise and alarm. Whatever Bracegirdle was prepared to see, the reality surpassed the anticipation. Hyderabad only was calm and untroubled.

"Send for Barnabas Hutton," said Kavanagh.

"Sahib, there are too many present already. Your safety depends on perfect quiet," interposed Hyderabad.

Alethe waited to hear no more, but ran for Barnabas, and soon came back with him.

"Barnabas," said Kavanagh, faintly, "I shall never ride with you again on your elephant."

"Let every one leave the room but Alethe," said Barnabas, firmly and promptly. No one present had seen him display such decision and dignity.

"I await the command of the sahib; I am his physician," said Hyderabad, with a slight depression of the brows.

"Go!" added Kavanagh; "to Barnabas I confide myself."

"Right about face, then," said the major; "there is no virtue like quick obedience. Eyes to the door! march!"

Major Rainbold retreated, followed by Bracegirdle and the young ladies. Hyderabad was the last to leave the apartment; he strode away with the same unmoved countenance with which he had entered.

Barnabas closed the door the instant they were out of sight, and locked it.

"Now, girl," he said, "what's to be done must be done quick. If something isn't done to that arm, it'll have to be cut off afore twelve hours! It looks to me for all the world as if it had been wounded by a pizened arrow."

"Sahib," said Alethe, "this wound has been poisoned since I left you last night. One fatal drop has mingled with your blood, which, unless met by a powerful counteragent, will surely result in death."

"I fear your announcement is but too true," answered Kavanagh. "That dark villain was unworthy of our confidence. I commend myself to heaven."

"Look at this, sahib," said Alethe, holding up the serpentine phial. "Last night it was more than forty English miles distant; this morning it is here. In this vial is life, hope, and love! In life there is all; without it there is nothing."

She gazed in triumph at the sparkling liquid; then, with a steady hand, dropped into Kavanagh's wound one glowing, glistening drop. It fell, flashing like a molten diamond, and, hissing in the red flesh, disappeared like lightning.

"It burns like fire!" groaned Kavanagh. "It darts up my veins like splinters of steel!"

"It will save you," murmured Alethe.

"Is there no doubt? Is your faith full and perfect?" gasped Kavanagh.

"It is. I have not a shadow of fear," answered Alethe, with singular confidence.

Barnabas whispered in her ear: "Lethal! Lethal! He may have deceived you."

"No—no! There is that within me that assures me beyond the fear of distrust. Do you not see that it affects him already?"

Kavanagh heaved a profound sigh. He felt relief from a terrible pressure. That nameless horror that had been drifting through his nerves for the last hour fell powerless and dead, stricken down by a more potent element.

His consciousness ebbed back from the gateway of death, towards which it had been tossing and rolling, like the billows of the unquiet sea.

Kavanagh stretched out his right hand. Alethe flushed and trembled, then, with a smile, pale and fluctuating as the light of the zodiac, placed the tips of her fingers in his palm.

He tried to close his hand upon the quivering little members, but his strength was gone. He gave her one grateful look that more than repaid her toil and danger; then his eyes closed with an irresistible languor, and the balmy influence of the ineffable elixir was fully upon him.

He did not sleep, but swam deliciously to and fro in a perfect state of rest between sleeping and waking.

"Bruise these leaves, Mr. Barnabas," said Alethe, in a soft tone, after viewing with wonder and delight the benign effects of the antidote.

Hutton bruised some leaves in a wooden mortar, and assisted the girl to bind them carefully upon his arm. This and other friendly offices she silently and gently performed. Kavanagh, though he could not see nor hear her, was conscious of her presence.

There was a soft tap at the door. Alethe answered it, and Ida Macgregor glided in, pale and anxious. Her quiet features and nearly suspended respiration thrilled her at first with a terrible apprehension; but the passionate calmness of Alethe's expression and the satisfied manner of Barnabas, undecieved her.

Alethe placed a chair for her near the bed, which she accepted readily.

"He must not be left alone," said Alethe, in her liquid tones. "We must watch him by turns. Mr. Barnabas, let neither Hyderabad nor Bracegirdle enter this room."

"Lethal," replied Barnabas, earnestly, "when you speak, I forget that I have a will of my own."

Alethe smiled, and Barnabas posted himself at the door, with a heart so honest and so much in the service of Alethe and Kavanagh that there was not money enough in India to corrupt it.

CHAPTER X

KAVANAGH'S tranquil state continued; fair and faithful watchers sat by his bedside; Barnabas Hutton stood guard over the entrance to the chamber; the major walked restlessly to the verandah, while Melicent passed the drowsy hours in her own room, or suffered the fustian of Bracegirdle's company below stairs. That gentleman made repeated attempts to divert her attention, and produce a favourable impression; but never with much success. He approached more than once the subject of his love, but only to be driven from it by her adroitness or indifference. Finally, rendered desperate, he accused her of heartlessness, and a design to trifle with his hopes and feelings.

Piqued by his charges, she wished to know by what

right he questioned her conduct, or what reasons she had ever given him to expect more from her than friendship? Had she accepted him as a suitor, and if so, at what period; for she could not remember that the word "love" had passed between them. In future, she begged of him to confine his attentions to the ordinary courtesies of life, nor aspire to anything more. She was not a child to do a foolish thing because two pleasant old gentlemen wanted her to do so, or was willing that she should. That was her final answer, and he could go about his business.

This was the substance of a conversation which left Raynor Bracegirdle in a miserable, saggy, mortified, and dissatisfied state of mind. In this unamiable mood he left the bungalow, and walked about the grounds, where he had time to reflect upon his position, which was anything but desirable. His sentiments toward Kavanagh had not changed. He still beheld in him a rival, and the author of his present unhappiness.

While in the young officer's room, and a witness of the suffering that he had himself produced, he experienced remorse; but since his interview with Melicent this weakness had passed. He was again Raynor Bracegirdle, the son of a nabob. In his anger and chagrin, he exulted in the dark deed of which he was the prime mover and author.

He stretched himself beneath a tamarind-tree, and looked toward the quarter of the native servants, momentarily expecting to see one coming to him, with the news of Kavanagh's death. A consciousness that made him tremble blazed through his brain. A miserable being called Hyderabad—a slave, a serf, a peon—held over him a secret like a flaming sword! This creature might at any time, prompted by malice or mischief, make an exposure of his crime and its cause, and render him a criminal in the eyes of the law. This thought was not to be endured; it stung, it maddened him. He hated not only Kavanagh, but also Hyderabad, with a burning intensity of hate.

His education, his prejudices, his habits, his position, his wrath, each and all added to the haughty and contemptuous detestation which had suddenly grown within him for the willing tool he had employed to rid him of a supposed rival.

Without consideration, without that forethought that pauses to reckon results, without that calm judgment that looks into futurity, and deduces a prophecy of what is to come from the present, he hurried to the apartment which the hospitality of Rainbold had furnished him, and swallowed a large quantity of arrack, which inflamed his anger, deepened his humiliation, and whetted his appetite for revenge. He who has not learned restraint in childhood will not learn it in manhood.

Raynor Bracegirdle stalked from the now quiet bungalow, a desperate and reckless man. He wanted an object on which to wreak his vengeance. When he had walked some distance he came suddenly upon the one he was thinking of—Hyderabad, reposing beneath a canopy of vines and palm-leaves. It was the opportunity he wanted. He was one of the lords of the soil; he had stricken such vermin before, but never with the incentive that now urged him on. It was but the drawing of a dagger—the raising of an arm—the striking of a blow—the flowing of a red fluid—that was all!

Raynor Bracegirdle could do that. The death of a tawny wretch would conceal the crime of a white Christian. So he approached Hyderabad without noise; so he stole up to Hyderabad without sound; so he stood over Hyderabad like a silent spectre.

He struck—as he had done before—and the dagger rebounded like an india-rubber ball; the weapon alighted upon a shirt of mail!

Hyderabad sprang to his feet, and laughed a bitter, mocking laugh.

"Undeigned fool!" he exclaimed. "Did you imagine that one trained from infancy to the practice of cunning and the arts of subtlety could be cheated and surprised by a white-skinned European! Sahib, you are to me as milk to arrack; as water to inflammable spirit. I know you! How well I know you! I expected you would try the dagger. I cared not for that. I am a minister of death. I dropped the deadly drop into the oozing wound more for myself than for you. I know my trade. I know the dreadful mystery of Bowance—the deity of the Phansigars. You are to me as the tottering footsteps of the fearful child. Before you, all is uncertainty and doubt; before me, all is revealed and clear. Think not that I am disappointed; the deadly deity I serve has given me better wisdom. Simpleton!—double simpleton! I am thine enemy as much as his. Give me the opportunity, and I would drop the decomposing drop into thy blood as calmly as into his. Stare at me, European! Open thy weak and feminine eyes. It is true! Instead of being the master, thou art the neophyte and I the master. Sahib"—he pointed toward the bungalow, and the great carbuncle on his throat flamed in the afternoon sun—"tell me where that

airy structure will be in forty-eight hours? Tell me what will be the destiny of those who now repire beneath that thatched roof? If you can tell me these things, speak!"

"Hyderabad," said Bracegirdle, shivering. "I cannot. If thou art Satan, say so; if thou art man, say so."

A troubled and sombre expression grew over the features of Raynor.

"I am intermediate," replied Hyderabad, turning the whites of his eyes upward. "What I do not know will be whispered darkly in my ear. The inspirations of wickedness are ever present. To be all-powerful, you must be an angel or a demon. These two powers have it all their own way; and on this earth it is impossible to tell who is the angel and who is the demon. You will find it thus. I have passed as a saint with weak women, when I was a fiend and a fallen spirit in the eyes of the all-pervading deity."

Hyderabad arose; he stretched forth his muscular arms and his brown hands; he turned his mysterious eyes toward heaven, and laughed sardonically.

Raynor Bracegirdle instinctively drew back. His own wickedness seemed to threaten him; his own evil passions seemed rolling upon him like a mountain.

"Think not," answered Raynor, with wonderful self-possession, "that I am like your race. I laugh at your follies, and the tricks of your despicable order are lost upon me. Begone! Show not your accursed face again. Look at this!" He drew a revolver from his breast. "There are six deaths in this! Away, and let me see you no more."

"Not so. We'll make another compact," said Hyderabad.

"Never! never!" cried Bracegirdle.

"Be not too confident, sahib. You want the two maidens. You would bear away your countrywomen and her starry-eyed maid," said Hyderabad, with cool assurance.

"Instead of studying new devices for my pleasure, why do you not ask why I struck?" demanded Raynor.

"Why should I ask what I know? My work was done; the deadly poison had been infused into his blood. You believed you had no further need of me. You wished no partnership with the despised son of India. You thought a secret might be better kept by one than two. You were right. Had I been Bracegirdle, and you Hyderabad, I would have slain Hyderabad. I cannot complain. It is the way of the world. My life is worth nothing to you any longer than it serves your purpose."

The native looked dreamily at the moonstone in the hilt of his dagger.

"Your philosophy is well suited to your condition. But tell me, wayward fatalist, how long before that drop will complete its mysterious work?"

"Its action is decisive, and your enemy will go back to the elements sooner than I predicted. In twenty-four hours the fire in his body will be absorbed by the fire of the sun. The earthly particles will go to earth, the airy atoms to air, and the dust will be as it was in the beginning."

The native still gazed into the moonstone:

"Did you, or did you not, feel that you were suspected?" asked Raynor.

"I knew I was suspected as I stood by the bedside. I read suspicion in the eyes that were levelled on me like spears. But I cared not. When it is time for Hyderabad to give back the little spark within him to yonder glowing god of fire"—he pointed to the sun—"it will fly to its starting-point as the shuttle flies to the hand of the weaver."

"You are a fire-worshipper?" said Bracegirdle, involuntarily.

"I know not what I worship, but I know that I am warmed and lighted by the glittering rays of that glorious luminary. Heat and light are the father and mother of all things."

Hyderabad threw out his arms as if to bathe his hands in the eternal beams. He turned his face upward in gloomy ecstasy, as if to inhale a new afflatus from the sun.

"Talk not of matters so far away and beyond the grasp of the senses of man. It is of more consequence to me to know who lives and who dies within the next twenty-four hours than to fathom all the mysteries of fire and air. Let us be practical, Kavanagh"—he lowered his voice—"will you?"

"Will give his fire to the fire of the sun," intoned Hyderabad.

"Away with your metaphors!" sneered Bracegirdle. "Kavanagh will die. Well, what then? I will tell you what I think the what-then will be. The circumstances of his death will be so singular, that an English surgeon will be summoned from Cawpore or Lucknow to examine the body."

Bracegirdle looked anxiously at Hyderabad, who laughed disdainfully.

"Let them," he answered, bring all the surgeons in India, and not one of them will be the wiser for the

journey. If one should be bitten by a mad tiger and die, think you that all the surgeons in the world could find the virus that produced the death? It is impossible! On that point be at ease. And, besides—"he fingered the flaming carbuncle—"the eye of a surgeon will never rest on the body of the young Rajahsman."

"What mean you?" hastily inquired Raynor.

"I mean that lightning may strike a tree and shiver it to atoms. What you do, do quickly."

Hydrabad's yellow features worked with that dark vehemence that characterized his inexplicable nature.

"Snatch the orange while it is within your reach," he resumed. "Pluck the grape while the cluster hangs low."

"I would fain do it, if I know how!" muttered Raynor.

"The moonstone is clear in my sight. He that would do a thing has but to try. I possess a mystic life of which plodding earth-fools dream not."

His daring eyes flamed like the carbuncle on his breast.

"If Satan ever walked the earth in human form," said Bracegirdle, in a shivering voice, "him thou art! Avarnt, glittering devil!"

"Knowing me as you know me, you perceive there is little need that I should ask what you desire. Your mind is more transparent to Hydrabad than this moonstone. The love wherewith you love her is not love, but passion."

"Whom?" gasped Raynor.

"Melicent!" breathed Hydrabad, softly. "The love wherewith you love the other," he continued, "is passion, and something more."

"Whom?" sighed Raynor.

"Alethe?" answered Hydrabad, yet more softly.

"You have caught me, Satan!" cried Raynor.

"Yes, European, I have caught you; but wanting you not, I give you back to yourself, or rather to your selfishness."

"Thanks for the gift!" retorted Raynor, ironically, "in consigning me to my own pleasures. But these girls? They haunt me. Both mistresses and maid have taken possession of my imagination, and give me no rest, day nor night. Yes, we will make yet another compact?"

"Said I not that?"

"Who but Satan should know what is to happen? I am ready to bargain with you."

"Say on."

"Can you provide me with horses, and two bold, truly fellows?"

"I can."

"Mark you, Hydrabad! They must not be effeminate and loitering rogues, but firm and hardy villains, who can look a European straight in the eyes without fear, and who are as familiar with their weapons as with their own teeth."

"Such are within my reach. Had they been made for you, they could not be more conformable to your description. They are sons of the jungle. The tigers tremble at the names of Tilac and Kassim. Tilac and Kassim are tiger-hunters and tiger-trainers."

"The very men!" exclaimed Bracegirdle.

"And their services will cost you another thousand rupees," added the native.

"That will be two thousand rupees in all. I have not many to spare, at present."

"Being aware of that fact, I have prepared a paper for you to sign; which is no more nor less than an order on the nabob, your father."

Hydrabad drew a paper from his breast with the utmost coolness. Raynor stared at him in wonder.

"It is no satanic bond!" laughed the native. "I want no more of your soul than is contained in the rupees. Here is a pen—sign!"

Raynor Bracegirdle took the paper, and found it in due form. His hand trembled when he received the pen from Hydrabad. He scrawled his name at the bottom of the draft.

"You observe," said Hydrabad, "that it is dated a week in advance, which prevents me from taking advantage of your confidence, and drawing the money before the service is rendered."

"Your honesty," retorted Raynor, very drily, "is remarkable, and a little less than your foresight! Now, that matter being settled, the details of the scheme remain to be arranged. I am anxious that the venture should be made within forty-eight hours at the furthest. Can your tiger-hunters be here?"

"Without fail."

"Let it be so. I trust myself in your hands yet again. Be faithful, and forget that my dagger found your shirt of mail."

"I bear no malice. When next you seek my life, aim at the throat, or try some more certain means. I do not easily."

"Do not for a moment—"

"Make no protestations," interrupted Hydrabad, sternly. "You know not what may happen; nor

need you trouble yourself about the future. When the hour comes to carry away mistress and maid, trust in Tilac. As for myself, do not be surprised if you see me little for the next two days. Take no thought about my absence or presence. When it is necessary for you to see me, you will find me at your elbow."

"I could almost swear to the last," muttered Bracegirdle.

"You'll want an elysium for your hours," added the native, carelessly. "A safe retreat where your marriage may be arranged at your leisure."

He pronounced the word "marriage" in such a manner that Bracegirdle started, as if he had stepped on a serpent. There was a cold and penetrating light in his eyes that was like the glitter of steel.

Raynor turned and walked from him, impelled by a secret terror that he could not overcome. When he had gone a few paces he looked for Hydrabad, but he had disappeared. Surprised by the circumstance, he went back and searched among the trees, and was finally obliged to leave the mystery as he had found it.

Never had an interview so strangely affected him. He half-doubted his own identity. Hydrabad seemed, to his startled fancy, to be walking, unseen, at his side. He rather expected to hear his derisive laugh, or his clear, mocking, and sometimes melodious voice.

With his dislike of the native superstitious dread was also mingled. Fascination and fear exerted two opposing forces, from neither of which could he escape. If, influenced by the latter, he thought to fly from the bungalow, the former arrested his purpose, and held him fast.

CHAPTER XI.

NONE of Major Rainbold's household understood the character of Kavanagh's dangerous symptoms except Alethe. Vague suspicions had troubled Ida Macgregor, but they took no definite shape. Even Kavanagh was ignorant of the manner in which his wound had been tampered with, nor had he a clear view of the subject till Alethe enlightened him. The knavery of Hydrabad and the complicity of Bracegirdle were gradually unfolded to him by her after he had slept, and was free from pain and anxiety.

The revelation was not so startling to him, however, as to Ida Macgregor, who received it with the utmost consternation. The attempt to take life by a method so cruel and cowardly indicated a degree of wickedness which she found it difficult to conceive of. She dared not communicate this astounding development to her guardian, lest his impetuosity should bring swift judgment on the head of the criminal; neither did she feel at liberty to withhold it from Melicent.

Toward Alethe, the brave girl who had prevented the catastrophe, Miss Macgregor felt the deepest gratitude, and had her describe minutely the means by which she had gained possession of the plot, which had been by hiding herself in the hollow trunk of a banyan-tree, and hearing the conversation that passed between Bracegirdle and Hydrabad, in consequence of which she had made such extraordinary exertions to obtain the antidote from the old man, Meerab.

Barnabas Hutton was too faithful and deserving not to be taken into her confidence, and as soon as Kavanagh was able to converse without detriment, the whole subject was freely discussed with him.

His honest ire was so much excited that it required all the persuasive powers of the three combined to prevent him from taking instant vengeance on both the assassins.

After several private meetings, held in Kavanagh's chamber, it was concluded to let the matter rest till the following day. Barnabas, though at first opposed to the measure, was at length brought to consent by a few words from Alethe.

Not only the major but Melicent also was mystified by the proceedings in Kavanagh's room. They were not satisfied until Ida had in person assured them that the patient was doing well, and desired to be attended only by Barnabas Hutton and herself; that Alethe had applied some native remedies that were acting with singular efficacy, and other things of a similar nature.

Melicent was in an anomalous mental state. Her imagination had been captivated by Neal Kavanagh. She could not herself define her feelings towards him. She thought him a hero, and the woman who thinks a man a hero is in a fair way to love him.

Melicent went further. She said within herself, "He is handsome." The woman who says to herself, "This man is handsome," is already two-thirds in love, whether she knows it or no.

Melicent asked herself if Ida Macgregor had discovered so many bright qualities in Kavanagh as she had done. She had watched Ida with the closest attention; but that young lady was self-conscious and such a model of propriety that it was the hardest thing in the world to determine her mental state.

If Melicent cherished tender sentiments for Lieu-

tenant Kavanagh, she was much too proud and sensible to display them in an unbecoming manner.

The day was very irksome to her, and the danger of the young man disturbed her more than she was ready to admit. The promising change in his condition gave her real relief.

Near the close of the day, Alethe tripped into the garden to inhale the pure air, and think calmly of the incidents of the last twenty-four hours.

Bracegirdle, ever prowling and vigilant, seized upon the opportunity, and approached her as if by chance. She beheld his advance with neither terror nor timidity. Knowing the man and his secret, she believed that she possessed an advantage of no trifling importance. Raynor thought he would try the susceptibility of the maid, hoping she would prove more kind than the mistress.

"They call you Alethe," he said, with a condescension that he well knew how to assume.

"Those who know me call me Alethe," she answered.

"You might have been called Letho, for your eyes are rivers of light, whose waters, once imbibed, may well render one oblivious of all else."

"What is Letho?" she asked.

"One of the rivers," answered Raynor, "whose waters produce forgetfulness of the past."

"Drink not of me," returned Alethe, in a warning voice.

"Nay, fair creature, say not so. I would taste, though forgetfulness were eternal."

"And I say to you, taste not!" responded Alethe, with a contemptuous toss of the head. "Thou art like opium or hashoosh that intoxicates the brain and fascinates the senses. Take neither opium nor hashoosh!" said she, curling her lip with contempt.

"Go to my mistress, and tell her she is a drug; as for me, I am not the drug you want. I can exert but one power over you, and that is for your destruction."

"I cannot understand you, dreamy Alethe. Those tropical eyes and those balmy lips can give nothing but bliss."

"To thee they can give neither."

She paused before him, and looked up into his face.

"Leave me," she added, "and go to your master."

"I have no master, girl!" replied Raynor, with hauteur.

"You have a master, and his name is Hydrabad," said Alethe, quietly.

"You have touched me more nearly than you think," exclaimed Bracegirdle, taken by surprise, and off his guard. "What know you of this Hydrabad?" he asked.

"Enough to make me shun him—enough to make me shudder when he approaches—enough to make me keep out of his way," answered Alethe, with earnestness.

"Bah! He is but a tricking juggler."

"I know not that. There is a dark spirit within him. Once he touched me with his finger, and I thought a serpent had bitten me."

Bracegirdle involuntarily shuddered.

"Let us not waste breath in talking of Hydrabad," he said. "It is you who have lured me hither. Listen to me, and make your choice quickly. Your mistress, cold and unfeeling, unwarmed by the kindly influences of love, has rejected me, as if I were her slave. That rejected and scorned love I offer to you. Accept it, and we will fly together, to seek happiness in some calm and distant retreat, where neither envy nor malice shall reach us to disturb our tranquillity, or dash the chalice of happiness from our lips."

"A delightful picture! 'Tis a pity this speech could not have been heard by my mistress."

"She has heard it," replied Melicent herself, stepping from behind a cluster of trees.

"And it gives me great pleasure to know that Mr. Bracegirdle's heart has not been materially injured by me."

She laughed lightly, and added:

"Mr. Bracegirdle, if my maid says 'yes,' I will not be so cruel as to say 'nay.' There will be no need, however, of flying to that distant retreat to drain the cup of bliss; for if the girl be willing, you can marry here without trouble or perplexity, or the hazard of that long journey."

"Mock on, Miss Rainbold!" sneered Bracegirdle.

"When the hour of my triumph arrives, perhaps I shall remember this treatment."

"May that hour never come!" said Melicent, fervently.

"May it never come!" repeated Alethe, with equal earnestness. "And now," she added, looking at Raynor, "you are rejected, both by mistress and maid, and I see nothing to detain you longer here. Hasten to that dark and glittering-eyed Hydrabad, and find a remedy for your disappointment."

"As the guest of your father, Miss Rainbold, I have a right to expect different treatment."

"You have a right to be scourged from hence with

rods, like a cur that has turned and bitten its master!" cried Alethe, swelling with indignation.

"Alethe! Alethe!" interposed Melicent.

"My mistress, you know not the wickedness of this man; but the time is near when he shall be unveiled, and you shall see him as he is."

"I will order my horse, Miss Rainbold, and leave at once your inhospitable roof!" protested Raynor.

"I meant not, Mr. Bracegirdle, that the matter should go so far as that. As a guest, you are right welcome to remain, providing you forget this silly passion of love-making to every pretty face you chance to see. Bridle your anger and make the best of it," said Melicent, in a conciliatory tone.

Bracegirdle left them, threatening instant departure.

(To be continued.)

RESTLESS NIGHTS.

SOME persons "toss and tumble" half the night and get up in the morning weary, unrefreshed, and dispirited, wholly unfit, either in body or mind, for the duties of the day; they are not only incapacitated for business, but are often rendered so ungracious in their manners, so irritable and fretful, as to spread a gloom over the whole household. To be able to go to bed and be in a sound, delicious sleep, an unconscious, deliciousness in five minutes, but enjoyed in its remembrance, is a great happiness and incalculable blessing, and one for which the most sincere and fervent thanks should habitually go up to that beneficent Providence which vouchsafes the same through the instrumentalities of a wise and self-denying attention to the laws of our being.

Restless nights as to persons in apparent good health arise chiefly from first, an overloaded stomach; second, from worldly care; third, from want of masculine activities proportioned to the needs of the system. Few will have restless nights who take dinner at mid-day, and nothing after that except a piece of cold bread and butter and a cup of some hot drink; anything beyond that only tempts nature to eat when there is no cause for it, thus engendering dyspepsia and all its train of evils.

Worldly care!—for those who cannot sleep from the unsatisfactory condition of their affairs, who feel as if they were going behindhand, or they are going to encounter great losses, whether from their own remissness, the perfidy of friends, or unavoidable circumstances, we have a deep and sincere sympathy. To such we say, live hopefully for better days ahead, and meanwhile strive diligently, persistently, and with a brave heart to the end.

But the most common cause of restless nights is that exercise has not been taken to make the body tired enough to demand sleep. Few will fail to sleep soundly if the whole of the daylight, or as much thereof as will produce moderate fatigue, is spent in steady work in the open air, or on horseback, or on foot. Many spoil all their sleep by attempting to force more on nature than she requires. Few persons will fail to sleep soundly, while they do sleep, if they avoid sleeping in the daytime, if they will go to bed at a regular hour, and heroically resolve to get up the moment they wake, whether it is two, four or six o'clock in the morning. In less than a week each one will find how much sleep his system requires; he should therefore give it that and no more.

EASY TRAVELLING.—The next morning, shortly after we had resumed our journey, we saw at some distance before us a nondescript-looking object floating on the water, which turned out, on nearing it, to be a white-bearded old gentleman taking a voyage down the river to Tekrit, to which place he said he was going on business. His mode of travelling was exceedingly primitive, and doubtless less fatiguing than either walking or riding. He was seated astride upon a heap of rushes secured upon half-a-dozen inflated sheepskins, and thus, tranquilly smoking a pipe, was proceeding, without any exertion on his own part, to his destination. His naked legs hung down on each side into the water, serving as paddles, three or four vigorous kicks sufficing to give his conveyance an inclination either to the right or the left. We offered him a place on our kelek, which he accepted, and taking his frail raft in tow, we continued our course. —"A Journey from London to Persepolis." By John Usher, F.R.G.S.

DEFORMED CHILDREN.—There are in Great Britain over 30,000 children suffering from various kinds of deformity. In the majority of cases this has been brought on by neglect or accident, and, if not curable, is capable of much relief by careful nursing and medical attention. In order to afford this, and for the purpose of giving instruction in trades that might enable them to support themselves, "The Cripples' Home" was established for girls above the age of 10. But as children of younger age are much more sus-

ceptible of cure, another home, "The Cripples' Nursery," 4, Henrietta Street, Duke Street, Portman Square, was opened in 1862, for children of both sexes below the age of 10. Already about 30 have been received, to the great advantage of many; but as the house is small and in other respects very unsuitable, it is felt desirable to obtain one better adapted to the purpose. In addition to £800 already collected, £1,000 is still required to make up the necessary amount. Messrs. Smith, Payne, and Co., 1, Lombard Street, have kindly consented to receive subscriptions for this institution.

BUILT UPON THE SAND.—The pyramids of Dashour, in Egypt, are four in number, about three miles from Saccara, in the neighbourhood of the former city of Memphis. Two of them are of stone and two of brick. The bricks, which are crude, are about sixteen inches long, eight wide, and four and a half thick, some with and some without straw, and the whole mass has been laid with such skill that in the course of centuries not a single brick has slipped from its place. This is the more remarkable as one of them is literally built on the sand. The sand of the desert has been collected, laid perfectly level, and confined by walls, and on this foundation the building has been raised. From the excellence of the brick-work it has been conjectured that this is the pyramid mentioned by Herodotus as being built by Asychis, a successor of Mycirus, with a boastful inscription challenging for his work a comparison with the pyramids of stone.

WOMAN AND HER MASTER.

By J. F. SMITH, Esq.

Author of "The Jesuit," "The Pretate," "Minnigrey," &c.

CHAPTER CXXV

Do you like letter-reading? If you do,
I have some twenty dozen very pretty ones:
Gay, sober, solemn, rapturous, very true,
And very lying, stupid ones, and witty ones,
On gilt-edged paper—blue, perhaps, or pink—
And frequently in fancy-coloured ink.

Epis Sargeant.

THE jeweller and his partner—for the poor parish boy, Goliath, by this time had become a member of one of the wealthiest firms in Lombard Street—were seated at their respective desks—Mr. Brindley, who was now an aged man, in the counting-house—he seldom attended to any other department—and his late assistant in the show-room—which was entirely under his superintendence—when two men made their appearance: one was the ordinary postman of the district—he threw a letter upon the counter, nodded, and walked out again with that steady business-like air which marked the sense he entertained of the trust reposed in him—and not without reason—for his beat was the most important in the City of London: correspondence involving the loss or gain of millions passed daily through his hands, to say nothing of the enormous sums in bills, notes, and cheques which the letters contained.

Goliath glanced at the letter, and recognized the Portsmouth postmark.

"An instant, my man!" he exclaimed to the second visitor, as he darted into the counting-house to Mr. Brindley.

"I can wait," was the reply.

"Portsmouth! Captain Vernon, sir!" said the junior partner, as he placed the welcome missive on the old gentleman's desk.

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed Mr. Brindley, as he broke the envelope, "it is not sealed with black."

His hand trembled so violently that he could scarcely read the contents.

"He is well!" he continued—"the dear boy is well; and by the end of August will be in England! Do you hear that? In England!"

And the countenance of the old man beamed with happiness at the prospect of once more beholding the son of the unhappy Alice.

"And of age, too!" observed Goliath.

"And of age!" repeated his partner. "I have already consulted Palgrave: he advised me to serve the tenants of the Riddle property with notice to pay no more rents to the earl or his agents. Ah, what a happy day it might have been!" he added, with a sigh.

"It will be a happy day!" said Goliath; "a day of retribution and justice—of fearful reckoning with his wretched father. The dread of it for years has haunted him in his career of heartlessness and tyranny. What must the reality be!"

All this while the second visitor had been amusing himself by looking at the treasures of art and wealth in the goldsmith's shop. He was a stout, hale, hearty man, between fifty and sixty years of age; his broad-brimmed hat, florid features, and the bright-coloured shawl twisted carelessly round his neck were the unmistakable indications of a guard or stage coachman

—a race almost extinct in these days of rails and locomotives.

"I forgot," added the speaker, quitting the counting-house, "that there is some one waiting for me! Now, my man, your business?"

"You must answer me a question or two first!" was the reply; "I don't tell my business to every one."

"Indeed!" said Goliath, at the same time casting a hasty glance over the various articles of jewellery which, in his haste, he had left lying upon the counter. His visitor followed the direction of his eyes, and his weather-beaten countenance flushed with a yet deeper hue.

"Haden't you better count 'em, sir?" he said; "all these pretty gimcracks. Maybe you think I have stolen some of 'em?"

"Not so, my friend!"

"Best be sure!"

"I am sure!"

"Well, I am glad of that!" muttered the man; "only if you should miss anything after I am gone, don't forget that I advised you to count 'em—that's all! I shouldn't like, after having been trusted with the mail-bags five-and-thirty years, to be suspected of—"

"Mail-bags?" interrupted Goliath.

"Yes!"

"Then your name is Dowling—guard to the Edinburgh mail?"

"As well known on the road," observed the man, with honest pride, "as you are on 'Change—and, maybe, trusted as much! But how came you, sir, to know my name?"

"From a friend of yours."

"James?"

The jeweller nodded in the affirmative.

"Then your name," continued the speaker, "is—"

"Goliath Obie!"

"All right, sir!" said the guard; "you are the very gentleman I want. I was told to be uncommon cautious. Can't make out," he added, "what Jim's up to—but it can't be anything very bad. I have known him, man and boy, for nearly fifty years: in the old lord's time, next in his eldest son's, now in his brother's. But I see you are impatient," he continued; "I won't keep you waiting long."

So saying, he took off his broad-brimmed hat, and after removing a handkerchief, two small packets, and a newspaper, extracted from the lining a letter, written in a round, schoolboy-like hand, and gave it to the goldsmith, who impatiently broke the seal and perused the contents.

"When do you leave?" he inquired.

"Start from the post-office at a quarter to eight—punctual as the clock!"

"I will be there as punctually," was the reply, "with my answer to the communication you have brought me! I need not tell you to be careful—James says that I may rely no less on your prudence than fidelity!"

The guard gave him a knowing wink, and a low, thick, half-strangled chuckle issued from the thick folds of the shawl which, summer and winter, he was accustomed to wear round his neck. Caution to him! it seemed such a capital joke. No wonder he laughed.

"Perhaps I am a man to be trusted, and perhaps I ain't!" he gurgled out at last. "Of course, after so many years on the road, Dan Dowling ain't up to a thing or two—not by no means—hold no more rain nor a horsecloth! Ha, ha, ha!"

Goliath counted him out five sovereigns. In an instant the mirth of the honest fellow was changed to suspicion. Five pounds for merely delivering a letter from his old pal, the footman at the abbey! He fancied there must be something wrong in it—he could not make it out.

"What is this for?" he inquired.

"For your trouble, my good man!" replied Goliath.

"Is it not enough?"

"Enough!" repeated the guard; "maybe it's too much! I don't like to think bad of an old acquaintance—but there's loads of plate at the abbey, and I ain't such a greenhorn as not to know that there are plenty of soup-shops in London—thof I never heard of one in Lombard Street afore!"

To the uninitiated of our readers, it may be as well to explain that, by the term *soup-shops*, the speaker meant those convenient houses where burglars and thieves dispose of any silver or gold plate which may fall into their hands. In such establishments the melting pots are always kept ready—the price not being paid till the recognition of the plunder is no longer possible.

"It is not for me to feel offended by your suspicions," observed the junior partner of the house of Brindley and Co. "As far as I am concerned, they are too ridiculous! It is your friend James."

"And so it is!" exclaimed the messenger; "and I was a fool for doubting him, or you, either, for the

master of that: so I axes your pardon—both your pardon."

"And the money?" said Goliah, pointing to the five sovereigns, which were still lying on the counter. The guard gave another of his knowing winks as he deliberately picked up the coin and thrust it into the capacious pocket of his aether habiliment, which he carefully buttoned.

"Perhaps," added the speaker, "I shall go down with you."

"Glad of your company, sir!"

"Will you secure the box for me?"

"Booked! Any more orders?"

"None."

"All right!" said the guard, touching his hat, as he quitted the shop. No matter what he undertook, or where he was going to, Dan Dowling, the well-known guard of the Edinburgh mail, never started even for a walk without pronouncing the to him sacramental words—"All right!" Pity the race of which he was the type is so nearly extinct.

Goliah read the letter a second time before taking it into the counting-house to his partner. It ran thus:

"Hox's Sir,—I fear there is mischief a-brewing! McWells has sent for Mrs. Attey: it can't be for no good. Master wouldn't be half so bad if it wasn't for her: she drives him in a snaffle or bit, just as she likes. I wish I could see you. Brooks is a poor, timid creature—but I think she wishes well to my lady. If you come before the old nurse returns, maybe I could smuggle you into the house: not that it would be of much use if you saw her ladyship—her mind is quite gone. Do come if you can, for I dare not write all I have to say. Your honour's to command."

"JAMES."

"You must go at once!" said Mr. Brindley, as soon as he was informed of the contents of the letter; "I have always felt that, as long as his lordship's interests were concerned, the life of my unhappy niece was safe; but now—"

"You do not suspect!" exclaimed Goliah, turning very pale, "that the earl, villain as he is, would dare to—no, no—it's too horrible! And yet, when I reflect on the death of Mrs. Bantum, Doctor Briard, and the madness of my dear lady, fortune seems to have played into his hands most curiously."

"Say, rather, criminally!" observed the old man; "there are few chances in Lord Moretown's calculations—they are certainties. I fear him and the female fiend who influences him more now than at any other period of their long career of tyranny and crime. When I reflect on the sufferings of my niece," he added, "her childhood, blasted by her father's avarice and selfishness—her wedded life more wretched even than her girlhood's years—the light of reason hopelessly extinguished—at times I feel tempted to ask if heaven has no longer an eye to watch over virtue, a glare to punish, or an arm to save."

"Both, master!" said his partner, addressing him by the old familiar name; "but the punishment will not prove the less severe that it has been prepared in advance."

Mr. Brindley shook his head despondingly.

"Can you doubt it?" continued the speaker. "Has not the earl already been stricken in the death of his favourite son—whilst our boy—my dear young lady's boy—has been preserved to us? Is he not now the heir of his name and honours? Does he not return to us a man? Brave—generous—good—all you could desire? And will not that prove a second blow to his unattractive father? Hope, then, the rest. Man's labours only are imperfect—the work of heaven is never incomplete."

"You are right!" said Mr. Brindley, after a few moments' reflection; "it was impious, perhaps, for me to doubt it; but at my age hope so long deferred smother the heart sick."

That same night his partner started with Dan Dowling for the north. We need not remind our readers how many years had elapsed since he first made the same journey.

When Mrs. Brooks first heard of the departure for London of the spy which Athalia had set over her, it was with the utmost difficulty she repressed the joy which the intelligence gave her. For years she had watched and prayed for a few hours' freedom, in order to accomplish an undertaking on the success of which her happiness in future life depended. What that undertaking was, the progress of events will show.

Much as Mrs. Attey was disliked in the household at the abbey, still she had one or two of the domestics whom she could confide in. To them she had delegated the task of watching the proceedings of Mrs. Brooks, whom she hated as vulgar minds hate those whose superiority contrasts with their own littleness and vanity. It was not, therefore, till the sixth night of her absence that the unhappy woman found the means to quit the mansion unobserved.

James had gone that same evening to Fulton, in the hope of meeting with his correspondent: he was not

disappointed—for, as the mail drove into the inn-yard, he recognized, by the light of the lamps, our old friend Goliah—who, on his last visit to the abbey, had so far won upon the old footman's confidence as to induce him to promise to write to him in certain events.

One of those events had at last occurred.

Perfectly assured that Goliah would understand his meaning, James left the inn-yard, and sauntered slowly through the village, without once looking back. Just as he passed the last house, the faithful friend of poor Alice overtook him.

"I have obeyed your summons!" he said, touching him on the shoulder.

"It is no more than I expected from you!" replied the old man; "but let us not converse here: on my way to Fulton I passed your cousin."

"My cousin?" repeated Goliah.

"Kell—have you forgotten him?"

"Ah, I remember!" exclaimed the goldsmith, with a smile; "the fellow who introduced me to the unfortunate nurse at the dance at the Moretown Arms?"

"The same! He might recognize you! Follow me into the park: my lord so seldom visits us, that the keepers take little heed of poachers or game."

For nearly an hour the traveller—wearied as he was—followed his guide in silence, till they reached a small gate—of which the domestic had the key—opening into the home preserve, which was situated about half a mile from the abbey. It was not till they had gained the thickest part of the wood that he relaxed his steps.

"We may converse here in safety!" began the old man. "I am guilty of no crime—and yet I feel as if my conscience was reproaching me! It is hard—very hard—at my time of life, to breathe a word against those whose bread I have broken for so many years; but there is a point where fidelity ceases to be a virtue!"

"You are right!" said his companion; "there is no fidelity in sin! Relieve my anxiety, I entreat of you! There is some danger to the unfortunate victim of her husband's cupidity and cruelty?"

"Not from my lord!" said the domestic, firmly; "bad as he is, there is a line beyond which he would hesitate to pass! It is the fiend who misleads him whom I dread."

"The governess?"

"She has sent for her confidante—Mrs. Attey. The reason assigned was that she required certain luggage left behind at the abbey. She stated in her letter that neither his lordship nor herself would visit the place this year. Now I know that to be false—for by the same post the steward received a communication from the earl, directing him to prepare the place for his reception by the time Parliament closed! So you see the affair of trunks and cases was only a pretence! With Mrs. Attey the reason for her actions seldom appears."

"How soon do you expect him?" inquired Goliah, with a groan.

"In about six weeks."

"His visit must be prevented, or at least delayed!"

"On the contrary!" replied the man, in an impressive tone, "pray that it may be accelerated! His presence will best guarantee my lady's safety; the earl has not the nerve he once possessed! Rely on it, no harm will occur whilst he is here."

"But till he comes?"

"I can answer for nothing," said the old man, "for I know nothing! Mrs. Bantum was bad enough, but she was an angel compared to the woman who has succeeded her! If we could but hit on any scheme to delay her return—everything depends on that."

"When will she arrive?"

"In two or three days at the furthest."

Goliah reflected for a few minutes. He was no longer the poor, simple, parish boy—but the experienced man of the world. It had done everything for him but corrupt his heart. He knew the power of wealth—and that he had at his disposal. In his zeal to serve the unhappy Lady Moretown he would have sacrificed the last shilling he possessed.

"Could I only contrive some pretext," he thought, "to detain the agent and confidant of her enemy for a week or two, her son by that time would be in England."

He determined on achieving this at any risk.

"What sort of a person," he inquired, "is this Mrs. Attey?"

"A vulgar virago! Poor Mrs. Bantum was a lamb to her!"

"Her age?"

"About fifty-five."

"Any peculiar feature," continued the goldsmith, "by which I might recognize her?"

"None that I know of!" answered the domestic.

"Yet stay!" he added, suddenly recollecting himself; "she has a scar on her right cheek. You cannot mistake it—it has the appearance of a burn!"

"That is sufficient," observed the traveller "I

will answer for her! And now, my good friend—for so you must permit me to call you—to the promise you held out to me in your letter! Conduct me into the house. I would fain witness the wreck which cruelty and cupidity have made, that I may at least bear back to those who love her the sad consolation of having seen her."

"She will not know you!" said his companion. "More than once I have tried to attract her attention, when I have seen her at the windows of her apartment! Memory and hope, feeling and consciousness, alike seem to have deserted her!"

Despite this melancholy assurance, the faithful fellow still urged his request with such earnestness that James felt unable to resist his supplication.

"I will do my best," he said; "but cannot promise you success! Not a word," he added, "as we approach the house: for the governess has more than one spy about the place."

The two speakers pursued in silence the narrow path which led from the preserve to the open ground in front of the mansion. Goliah knew the direction they were taking almost as well as his guide, although so many years had passed since his former visits to the place. As they emerged from the wood, the footman suddenly stopped.

"What is the matter?" whispered his companion.

The man pointed to the wing of the mansion inhabited by the countess and her attendant—at the end of which, our readers will recollect, was a conservatory fast falling into decay. A light streamed through the broken windows.

"Someone in the greenhouse!" he said. "Stay where you are! I will pass round to the south wing. All by this time must have retired to rest: perhaps I can introduce you by the servants' entrance."

"Any way, and at any sacrifice!" replied Goliah.

"If you succeed, rely on my liberality and gratitude!" Great as was his desire to see his former mistress, the speaker could not withdraw his eyes from the light in the conservatory. An impulse which he could neither account for nor resist riveted his attention to it. It was more than curiosity—it amounted almost to a fascination.

"Who can it be?" he murmured—"at such an hour? And for what purpose? Not a good one—the place so near the apartment of the countess! Providence may have brought me here to prevent some fearful crime!"

At this thought, utterly regardless of consequences—for in the event of detection and danger he was totally unarmed—the devoted friend of Alice advanced rapidly, though cautiously, towards the building. Fortunately the night was a dark one. When within a few yards of the conservatory, he crept upon his hands and knees till he approached sufficiently near to see what was passing in the interior.

By the light of a lantern which hung upon the bough of a catalpa-tree he discovered a female, whose face was turned from him, digging up the earth in one of the neglected forcing-beds. Evidently she feared some interruption of her work—for her exertion was incessant, and, for one of her sex, severe. A considerable pile of earth and decayed tan was already piled near her.

The first thought of the concealed witness of her labours was that she was preparing a grave—and a cold shudder ran through his veins as he mentally asked himself for whom!

After working some time in silence, the woman, with an air of extreme fatigue, threw down the spade, and stooping over the trench she had dug with so much labour, drew from it a small cabinet, evidently of foreign workmanship. It was curiously clasped with silver!

"What could it be?" Goliah asked himself. "Treasure? And if so, what was it to him?"

In all probability he would have quitted the spot without any further attempt to investigate the matter, had not the female turned round so as to reveal her features. He recognized them in an instant.

It was Mrs. Brooks, the attendant upon the countess—the woman whose confidence he had vainly attempted to win.

Urged by a sudden impulse, he sprang into the conservatory, snatched the cabinet from her hands, and disappeared as rapidly as he had entered the place.

The lantern was extinguished in the act.

The unhappy dupe of Athalia's pretended friendship sank upon the ground, overwhelmed with surprise and consternation: the excess of her terror prevented her giving an alarm. She could only wring her hands in silent grief.

"Gone!" she murmured, at last; "and with it my only hope on earth—the only chance I shall ever have of establishing my fair fame! It is in the hands of my cruel enemy! Now, then, I am indeed her slave! Let her command what she will, I must obey her—for my life—the life she has rendered wretched—is in her hands!"

So overwhelmed was she by her disappointment that it was some time before she could stagger back to the house. In her misery, the wretched creature accused Providence of having deserted her—of conspiring with the wicked for her destruction—little dreaming that it was working out its own inscrutable and unerring purpose.

It is ever thus with human judgment: how often, in its impatience of suffering, does it not accuse heaven of injustice!

When the domestic returned to the spot where he had left his companion, Goliath was nowhere to be found. It was in vain that he searched for him through the preserves and grounds. Day began to dawn when he retired to rest.

Unable to comprehend the affair, and fearing that some harm had befallen him, he repaired the next day to Fulton, where, in answer to his inquiries at the inn, he was informed that a gentleman had arrived at a very early hour, and demanded to be shown to a room, where he did not long remain, but ordered a chaise and four for London.

"Had he anything with him?" demanded the old man.

"Nothing," said the head-waiter, "but a curious-looking old box. Perhaps it contained a treasure—for he seemed very liberal with his money—paid the post-boys like a prince or a highwaysman."

The whole affair seemed so mysterious to the man that in his mind he was puzzled to decide which.

A chaise-and-four—the horses covered with foam—drove up to the front of the Queen's Head Hotel in the town of Newcastle. A crowd of curious idlers were flogging round the entrance. Before the waiters could reach the door of the vehicle the traveller had alighted. His first question was at what hour the mail from London passed through the town.

"Not till eight, sir," answered the landlord, bustling up to receive his guest. "Private room?"

"Yes. And let me have dinner as quickly as possible," answered the gentleman, whose mind appeared greatly relieved by the information he had received.

"And do me the favour to follow me," he added. "I wish to speak with you."

The host, mentally wondering what a person travelling in a chaise-and-four, who had half-killed the horses in his impatience—one had just fallen in the street—could have to say to him, carefully closed the door of the sitting-room into which the head waiter had ushered the stranger—who was no other than the reader's old acquaintance, Goliath.

"Have you any lawyers in this town?" was his first inquiry.

"Lawyers!" repeated the astonished Boniface; "well, I should think as some people will tell you that we have more than are good for them!"

"Whom do you consider the cleverest?"

"Depends on what you want him for, sir."

The wary traveller felt there was more wit in the remark than, from the stolid, heavy features of the speaker, he had given him credit for.

"I wish to arrest a debtor," he said, "without loss of time."

"In that case, sir, Jolland is your man. Sharp as a needle—will detect a flaw as quickly as I can a cracked bottle of wine. Capital electioneering agent—defeated the Beaumont party, and brought in his man."

"Send for him."

"Certainly, sir. Who shall I say wishes to see him?"

"He won't know my name: merely say that a gentleman wishes to consult him on urgent professional business. As for your own curiosity," added the speaker, with a faint smile, "you can charge the disappointment in the bill."

(To be continued.)

FACETIE.

Books in these days are generally like some kind of trees—a good many leaves and no fruit.

A MISER having been solicited to grant a favour, said, "On one condition I will do what you require. Never to ask me for anything."

A TRADESMAN who was very fond of his glass presented a cheque at a London banking-house, and being asked, as usual, "How will you have it?" replied, "Cold, without sugar."

A YOUNG sculptor, arrested for debt, wrote to a friend to visit him in *quod*. His first greeting was, "Well, my dear fellow, I suppose you are here for chiselling one of your creditors."

KING HENRY VIII. desired to send an embassy to Francis I. at a very dangerous time, and the nobleman selected for the mission begged to be excused. "Fear not," said the sovereign; "if the French monarch should take your life, I will take off the heads of a

dozen Frenchmen now in my power." "But of all these heads," replied the nobleman, "there may not be one to fit my shoulders."

Which is the most powerful—the earth or the sea? The sea, of course—it has such heaps of muscles.

TOM says the other day he saw a walking match; and Bill says that's nothing, for he saw a candle run.

BUT OF A JOKE.—If you want to control a hungry man, use him as you would a horse—put a "bit" in his mouth.

OPERA V. MUSIC.

Lady: "How was the opera last night, Mr. Gigot?"

Mr. G.: "Oh, superb! Great deal of dress and style, and—"

Lady: "But the music, Mr. Gigot—how was the music?"

Mr. G.: "Ah! Well, now—really, I never pay attention to the music!"

A FOREIGNER, who had mixed among many nations, was asked if he had observed any particular quality in our species that might be considered universal. He replied, "Me tink dat all men love lazy."

A POLITE philosopher once thanked a lady who had been singing to a party for an hour by saying, "Madam, you have wasted our time most charmingly."

MISS LOVELY says the males are of no account from the time the ladies stop kissing them as infants till they kiss them again as lovers.

AN Irish paper publishes the following item:—"A deaf man, named Taff, was run down by a passenger train and killed on Wednesday morning. He was injured in a similar way about a year ago."

It is stated by some wiseacre that the heart of a man weighs about nine ounces, that of a woman about eight. As the age increases, a man's heart grows heavier, and the woman's lighter—some girl's lose theirs at sixteen.

"It seems to me I have seen your physiognomy somewhere before," said a fop to a stranger whom he met, "but I cannot imagine where." "Very likely," replied the other; "I have been the governor of a prison for the last twenty years."

Two gentlemen having a difference, one went to the other's door, and wrote "Scoundrel!" upon it. The other called upon his neighbour, and was answered by a servant that his master was not at home. "No matter," was the reply, "I only wished to return his visit, as he left his name at my door in the morning."

A HIGHLAND NOTION OF ADMIRAL FITZROY.—A correspondent of an Inverness contemporary says that the fishermen of Portmahomack are under the impression that Admiral Fitzroy is the cause of all the violent storms that occur. "Confound that man Fitzroy, he's just worse nor Stine Bheag of Tarbat, for he has only to hoist that pig trum o' his to raise the wind!"

1864 AND 1865.—The *Charivari* publishes a woodcut in which 1864 is giving instructions to 1865, both represented under the guise of young women. In front of them is to be seen a tremendously fat Prussian soldier, walking about with great self-complacency. "If that customer," says 1864, "should call for anything, be sure not to serve him; for ever since I have been here he has done nothing but help himself."

A GENTLEMAN waited upon Jerrold one morning to enlist his sympathies in behalf of a mutual friend, who was constantly in want of a round sum of money. "Well," said Jerrold, who had contributed on former occasions, "how much does — want this time?" "Why just a four and two noughts will, I think, put him straight," the bearer of the hat replied. Jerrold: "Well, put me down for one of the noughts this time."

CANON GOODALL was proverbially fond of punning. About the same time that he was made Provost of Eton he also received a stall at Windsor. A young lady of his acquaintance, while congratulating him on his elevation, and requesting him to give the young ladies of Eton and Windsor a ball during the vacation, happened to touch his wig with her fan, and caused the powder to fly about. Upon which the doctor exclaimed: "My dear, you can get the powder out of the canon, but not the ball."

A QUEER MISTAKE.—Lord Scaford, who was born deaf and dumb, was to dine one day with Lord Melville. Just before the time of the company's arrival, Lady Melville sent into the drawing-room a lady of her acquaintance, who could talk with her fingers to dumb people, that she might receive Lord Scaford. Presently Lord Guildford entered the room; and the lady, taking him for Lord Scaford, began to ply her fingers very nimbly; Lord Guildford did the same; and they had been carrying on a conversation in this manner for about ten minutes, when Lady Melville

joined them. Her female friend immediately said, "Well, I have been talking away to this dumb man." "Dumb!" cried Lord Guildford; "bless me, I thought you were dumb."

FORGOT HIS NAME.—I know a great, overgrown, first-rate man in his place, writes a western friend, engaged in the mercantile business, who, one morning, with a pencil in hand, and a quill behind his ear, called out to his partner: "Bill, what is John Simplebean's first name?" And he never discovered his mistake, until he began to write it, when he forgot his last name, and with the same unconsciousness, sang out: "Excuse me, Billy, but I've forgot John Simplebean's last name, now!" The roar of laughter which ensued restored his memory.

DRIVERS of hackney-carriages are often insolent when they have to deal with ladies unaccompanied by a gentleman, and the following case will prove the assertion:—"Some few days since an actress of the Théâtre Français took a coach to drive to the theatre for a rehearsal, and asked the coachman for his number. 'Madame,' he replied, 'I only give my number to those who do not ask it.' And off he drove. On arriving at her journey's end, the lady alighted, and gave the driver 2 fr. for his fare. 'And my drink-money?' said he, in an insolent tone. 'Oh!' replied she, 'I only give drink-money to people who do not ask for it!'"

AN "ILE" STORY.—A story is told of a certain Mrs. Petroleum, whose husband had suddenly come into possession of a large fortune, and had erected a house to correspond to his enlarged means. Mrs. Petroleum had heard that it was necessary to have a "library," and accordingly sent to a popular bookseller and ordered one. A well assorted library of standard works was sent up to her house. Next day, down comes my lady in a towering rage at their selection. "Choicest works?" cried she, as an explanation was attempted, "better your choicest works; they were all different sizes and colours. I wanted them all in blue and gold, to match my furniture!"

CIVILIZATION IN FRANCE.—The following is a recent piece of foreign intelligence: "Fatal Duel.—The *Moniteur de la Meurthe* announces that M. Pompuan, 34 years of age, veterinary surgeon of the 2nd Dragoons at Toul, has been killed in a duel by an officer of the same regiment. *Moniteur de la Meurthe*: Surely this is a misprint. Should it not be *Kaiser de la Meurthe*?—Punch."

PROFESSOR PUNCH'S DREAM-BOOK.

LUCKY DREAMS.

To dream of nothing is lucky.

To dream that you have visited all Mr. Tappan's works (and on waking to find you haven't) is very lucky.

To dream, only to dream, that you have committed a capital crime, is lucky—for you.

UNLUCKY DREAMS.

To dream that, in a fearful shipwreck, you have been hurled upon a sharp rock, and to awake to a sense of your position on the floor, is unlucky.

To dream of goblins, villains of the deepest dye, assassins, daggers, and such things as utterly destroy your rest, is decidedly unlucky.

To keep on dreaming and awaking five times in a night is unlucky.

To dream that you are fighting for your life with wild bears, and to find yourself hitting your wife on the head with a bolster, is unlucky—very unlucky.

To dream that you are making a long and powerful address to a jury, and to deliver the same oratorically, is unlucky for any one who happens to be in the same room trying to go to sleep.

SIGNS.

To dream that you are in a land of golden apples and silver roses, with jewels and diamonds sparkling on the trees, and that you are dancing with a fairy-like being, whose face you think is not quite unfamiliar to you, is a sign that you're probably seen the transformation scene of a pantomime.

To dream that some one has given you two hundred millions billion thousand pounds, seven shillings and sixpence halfpenny, is a very good sign that you are dreaming.

To dream that you are being tried for something or other, what it is nobody in court, including the judge, seems to know, and that you are about to be hung for it, whatever it is, (at which point you awake with a start), is a pretty good sign that you've lately been reading the Old Bailey and police reports.

To dream that you were sitting in a room which is very like your own drawing-room, only not exactly it, and there met your cousin Tom, only it wasn't quite your cousin Tom, but rather taller, or fatter, or younger, and that he suddenly seemed to jump up in the air, and point all the same moment to a black monkey, at least, something like a monkey, only with a lion's tail, climbing up the bell-rope, which appeared

to be hanging from the centre of the ceiling, and that, all at once, you found yourself in a large open square with a box of sardines and a trombone, which you wanted to clean, but couldn't, on account of the cobwebs wax in the mouthpiece, and that somehow the trombone became your cousin Tom again, who insisted upon your swallowing a box of gelatine lozenges, because they were used on purpose for you, and that then came one, coming from somewhere, asked you to get inside, and you don't know how it was, but you found yourself in a cab, when, just as the driver banged the door, you awoke—to have dreamt all this is a sign that you're muddled up a jolly lot of things in your head, and it is to be hoped you are rather clearer when awake.

To dream that you are condemned by the Inquisition, and that heavy weights are being placed, by way of torture, on your chest, is a sign that you've probably gone to bed directly after supping on cold boiled pork.

To dream that you are going rapidly from the top to the bottom of a lofty flight of stairs, without any legs under you, is a sign that you require a little medicine.

To dream anything is a sure sign that you are asleep.—*Punch*.

LATEST INTELLIGENCE.

The lady who sunk all her capital in railways, is anxious to obtain a loop line to recover it with. She says she'll try it.

The gentleman who borrowed an oyster-knife to open an account at his banker's with, is anxious to meet with a patent corkscrew to draw a cheque with.

The person who let fall a remark about his friend, has taken up an observation made by a third party, and the law will be called in to decide the question of censorship.

The young heir who fell out with his father has dropped upon a snug thing, and is therefore likely to be taken up by his relatives.

The lady who broke off a match with her cousin because he would not come to the scratch, has got another flame.—*Pun.*

RELATIONS OF FOOD AND HEAT.

Let us consider the fuel which gives the necessary heat to the body. The temperature of a man is from 98 deg. to 99 deg. Fahrenheit, or about 40 deg. higher than the air is in this country. The body being, therefore, continually robbed of heat by a cold atmosphere, must have an internal source of supply. The fuel which burns in the furnace of the body consists mainly of bodies from which the element nitrogen is absent.

The order in which they form fuel of the best quality is as follows:—(1) fat, (2) starch, (3) cane sugar, (4) grape and milk sugar.

The value varies considerably, for 40 parts of fat will give out as much heat as 97 parts of starch or 100 parts of sugar, or 310 parts of flesh, when that structural food is used for such a wasteful purpose as the supply of heat to the skin. In the ordinary combustion of a fire, the oxygen of the air unites with the carbon and hydrogen of the fuel, forming carbonic acid gas and water.

The air taken in by the lungs furnishes oxygen to the blood. About 7 cwt. of this gas are annually inhaled by the lungs of an adult man, and nearly one-fifth enters into combustion in the body with the food. Clearly it must pass away again in some form, for the body of a healthy adult is the same in weight at the end as at the beginning of the year.

It is easy to calculate how much heat a daily supply of oxygen would afford; for the combustion in the body, though slow, gives out just as much heat as if the food were burned in a fireplace. After making full allowance for the heat expended in evaporating the usual quantity of water by perspiration, there is as much left as would raise 143 lb. of water, from 32 deg., the freezing point, to 212 deg., the boiling point.

As the water requires more heat to raise it through this range than the solids of the body, the amount of heat daily generated by the combustion of food is only sufficient to keep the body of a man of 150 lb. in weight at the proper temperature. As the quantity of coal consumed in a common fireplace changes with the conditions under which the combustion proceeds, so also does the quantity of food vary with the altering conditions of the body.

When a fire is stirred combustion is quickened, because oxygen from the air enters more freely among the particles of fuel, and unites with its ingredients. When the body of a man is stirred into activity by any cause, such as by walking, by labour, by speaking, the lungs act more quickly, additional oxygen enters the body, and its internal heat is augmented. The rhythm of the respiration regulates the quantity of air taken into the lungs and the oxygen absorbed.

About six-sevenths of the oxygen absorbed by the blood are used to burn the charcoal or carbon in the food, the other seventh part burning the free hydrogen of the fats or wasting the tissues.

An adult man in this country, while at rest, burns in his body rather more than 7 oz. of carbon daily; gentle exercise increases the amount to 8½ oz., and hard labour augments it to 11½ oz.

STATISTICS.

THE GERMAN SPAS.—Recent returns give the following as the number of foreigners who have visited some of the principal German spas during the last season: Baden, 49,545; Wiesbaden, 29,410; Teplitz, 20,255; Ems, 2,596; Ischl, 5,001; Marienbad, 4,535; Nauheim, 3,396; and Schlangenbad, 1,426.

COSTS IN BANKRUPTCY.—A recent local bankruptcy case exemplifies, on a small scale, the recent remarks of the Lord Chancellor. The estate realized £319 12s. 2d., which was expended in the following manner: For wages, rent, taxes, &c., payable in full, £117 0s. 2d.; for solicitors' bills, £110 11s. 7d.; for messenger's bills, £27 11s. 11d.; for auctioneers' bill, £30 10s.; for bankrupt's allowance, £10; for fees, £5 16s. 9d.; for petty expenses, £2 11s.; in all, £394 1s. 5d., leaving a sum of £15 10s. 2d. available for dividend, or a dividend of 5d. in the pound on £699 17s. 5d.—*Sheffield Independent*.

ANCESTRAL VOICES.

FRESH, young hosts, whose beoms swell
With eager longing for the strife,
Press to the place where others fell,
And fill the wasted ranks of life.

We in these places stand to-day—
Shall we not use our noblest powers
In guarding well and faithfully
The post of duty that is ours?

So shall we hand our fathers' fame
Untarnished to posterity,
Nor shame the dead, who bore our name,
In the still places where they lie.

And if we find, where now we are
Our ranks ancestral dimly move,
That any man was brave in war,
Or any woman true in love;

Then surely we, remembering these,
Can live as noble lives as they,
With light of added centuries
Poured unobstructed on our way.

Yet must we strive as they did then,
Nor falter when the task is great;
The truest women, bravest men,
Must pray and hope, and work and wait.

A. C.

GEMS.

THE sweetest of all pleasures, and one that will never decay, is to cherish the heart that loves you.

Those men who are of the noblest dispositions think themselves the happiest when others share their happiness with them.

ABUNDANCE is trouble, want a misery, honour a burden, and advancement dangerous; but competency, happiness.

We must love our friends as true amateurs love paintings; they have their eyes perpetually fixed on the fine parts, and see no others.

NEVER overpraise any absent person, especially ladies in the company of ladies. It is the way to bring envy and hatred upon those whom you wish well to.

NATURE is loved by what is best in us. It is loved as the city of God, although, or rather because there is no citizen. The sunset is unlike anything that is underneath it: it wants men. And the beauty of nature must always seem unreal and mocking until the landscape has human figures.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE death is announced of Mrs. Eliza Hughes, of Wolverhampton, in her 102nd year.

GENERAL DE BRETAGNERES DE COURTEILLES has just died at the age of 100 years.

It is said that the Emperor of Mexico has refused to approve of the concordat proposed for his acceptance.

ANCIENT GREEK STATUES DISCOVERED IN CASDIA.—In digging for the foundation of a mosque near the village of Hieropetros, on the site of some ancient

ruins, three ancient statues have been found. One appears to be the colossal statue of a warrior, unfinished, but of excellent workmanship. The second seems to be Oceana, with a small stag crouching at her feet. The third is a male figure, but, at present, it does not appear whom it represents. The figures are considered to be, in all probability, of Greek workmanship.

With this year the British Parliament has been in existence six hundred years, out of which Lord Palmerston has had a tenth as his share.

A COMPANY has started for supplying the public with filters for the purification of water, on the same principle that gas meters are furnished. They will be fixed and kept in repair, and a small rental charged.

THE Emperor Napoleon sent the key of his box at the Italian Opera to the United States Consul General, and the consul, not being a musical man, gave it to his domestics, who, to the intense astonishment of the audience, filled the Imperial box during a performance.

A NEW invention in France is said to be a pair of musical boots, which have been exhibited to the emperor. At every step the pressure of the foot produces melody—it may be a waltz, a mazourka, or an operatic air. This arrangement would be extremely convenient for a dancing master.

By her Majesty's command, the rates of personal allowances for officers of the army travelling on duty without troops have been fixed as follows:—For general officers, 20s. a day; for field officers, 15s. a day; and for captains and subalterns, 10s. a day.

CARE OF THE HEALTH.—A man had better break a bone, or even lose a limb, than shake his nervous system. Lord Coke requires only eight hours' application per day, for a student of the law, and Sir Matthew Hale thought six as much as any one could bear; eight, he said, was too much.

FIND OF COAL IN MEXICO.—A deposit of coal of the best quality has, it is said, been discovered in the mountains of Itohuca, at the distance of thirty leagues from the city of Mexico, and of sixty from Acapulco. Another deposit was discovered some little time since in the district of Tlalcala.

THE TITLE OF CLARENCE.—It is not generally known that the title of Duke of Clarence is taken from the small town of Clare, in Suffolk. Lionel, third son of King Edward III., who married Elizabeth, daughter and sole heiress of William de Burgh, Earl Ulster, by Elizabeth de Clare, had the new title of Duke of Clarence given to him.

SLUGS AND SNAILS.—Horticultrists in France make fierce complaints of the ravages committed this year by slugs and snails, the destruction of which has become a serious subject for consideration. It is calculated that 100 slugs eat 2½ lb. of grass per day; therefore 5,000 consume the food of a cow; and as they chiefly select the youngest shoots after sowing-time, they are more mischievous. General Higouat has established on his farm a systematic war against these invaders by means of an iron cutting instrument attached to a stick, with which he arms his farm servants and sends them forth immediately after the harvest has been reaped. A single man has destroyed 4,000 in one day; thus on the farm of Veyrac 120,000 are killed annually. From August to October these 100,000 would have devoured 2,000 lb. weight of grass daily, which is equivalent to 250 kilos of hay, the value of which is 12s. 50c. Multiplying this by ninety days, the result gives 20,250 kilos of hay (value 1,125s. or 45l.), which would have been destroyed had not the war been waged, whereas the pay of the labourers employed in eradicating this plague of slugs and snails only amounted to 50s. (2l.).

EVIL COMPANY.

THE following beautiful allegory is translated from the German:

"Sophronius, a wise teacher, would not suffer even his grown-up sons and daughters to associate with those whose conduct was not pure and upright.

"Dear father," said the gentle Eulalia to him one day, when he forbade her, in company with her brother, to visit the volatile Lucinda, "dear father, you must think us very childish if you imagine that we should be exposed to danger by it."

"The father took in silence a dead coal from the hearth and reached it to his daughter.

"It will not burn you, my child—take it."

"Eulalia did so, and behold, her beautiful white hand was soiled and blackened, and, as it chanced, her white dress also.

"We cannot be too careful in handling coals," said Eulalia, in vexation.

"Yes, truly," said the father; "you see, my child, that coals, even if they do not burn, blacken; so it is with the company of the vicious."

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CONVICT.—Declined, with thanks.
 M. W.—The colour of the hair is brown.
 J. D. R.—Apply to the secretary, Freemason's Tavern, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields.
 LAZIE LAUREL.—The lines do not nearly reach our standard, and are declined, with thanks.
 A. L. E.—We regret that we cannot avail ourselves of the lines entitled, "The Cottage Maiden."
 W. E. B. R.—All the numbers of the 7 DATA JOURNAL are in print. The price will be 3s., and postage 1s.
 SINCLAIR.—Probably you will find the information required in Stephen's "Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan."
 MELITA J. H.—As a first exercise in poetical composition, the lines entitled "Farewell" and "Love" are not altogether devoid of merit. Our fair correspondent will probably produce hereafter something better worth publishing.
 CECIL.—The handwriting is tolerably good; it would be better were the fine strokes less fine and the thick strokes less thick. We will comply with your request should occasion arise.

LAURA and LILY, daughters of respectable tradesmen, would like to correspond with two gentlemen of the sock and buskin. "Laura" is nearly nineteen years of age, with brown hair and hazel eyes. "Lily" is eighteen, with light hair and hazel eyes.

A POOR MAN.—The property being situated and the testamentary disposition of it made in the Island of Jersey, you will doubtless find the will deposited in the District Registry of Winchester, with which ecclesiastical division the Channel Islands are included.

M. A. W.—You cannot mean a special license, as only wealthy people incur the expense of obtaining these, which are, moreover, not easily procured. A special marriage license costs £50; a common license costs about £3 10s., and can be procured at Doctors' Commons.

ISOLA FONTAINE.—To remedy a sluggish state of the liver, the following is recommended: Take two ounces of the freshly-sliced root of dandelion, and boil in two pints of water until it comes to one pint, add one ounce of compound tincture of horse-radish; use occasionally.

N. B., who is seventeen, brown hair and eyes, good colour, and middle height, is very fond of music, singing, and dancing, would be pleased to correspond, with a view to matrimony, with a gentleman, who must be tall, not under twenty, and well educated.

H. L., who is nearly twenty-one years of age, of dark complexion, considered good-looking, domesticated, and of a loving disposition, would be glad to enter into a matrimonial correspondence with a highly-respectable gentleman somewhat older than herself.

TORREY and EVA would like to correspond matrimonially with two young gentlemen (fair preferred). "Torrey" is of the medium height, eighteen years of age, with brown eyes and hair, is good tempered, domesticated, and good-looking. "Eva" is 5 ft. 3 in. in height, has dark brown eyes and hair, and is of a cheerful disposition. *Curtis* required.

EXPECTANT, twenty-six years of age, 5 ft. 9 in. in height, of fair complexion, and in a Government office, wishes, with a view to matrimony, to make the acquaintance of a young lady of respectable parentage, well educated, of an amiable and loving disposition, and capable of performing the duties of home.

W. W., who is twenty years of age, tall, and of good figure, holding a responsible situation in her Majesty's service, desires to open a correspondence with some young lady "on matrimonial thoughts intent." "W. W." is accomplished, fond of home, and all he wishes for is a true and loving heart to make that home happy.

ALICE and ADA, the former a blonde, aged twenty-one, and the latter, a brunette, age eighteen, both of whom are good-looking, very domesticated, and also very musical, would be glad to enter into a matrimonial correspondence. Both feel that there is no place like home, and would make good wives.

K. and M., who are brothers, aged respectively twenty and twenty-three years of age, good-looking, and in a first-class business position, would like to correspond, with a view to matrimony, with two young ladies of from eighteen to twenty years of age, fair complexioned, pretty, and of a respectable family. Sisters or relations preferred.

PANSY, who is twenty-one, and LILY W., who is nineteen, would like to correspond, with a view to matrimony, with two young gentlemen. "Pansy" has light brown hair, and blue eyes, is good-looking, of medium height, and would prefer a tall, dark gentleman. "Lily" has fair hair and blue eyes, is 5 ft. 4 in. in height, and would also prefer a dark gentleman.

D. E. A.—The reason why natural light does not injure the eyesight, whereas artificial light does, is because natural light is composed of red, yellow, and blue rays in definite proportions (that is, five red, three yellow, eight blue); whilst artificial light always exhibits a greater or less preponderance of the red and yellow, the rays which are most stimulating and most injurious to the eyes. These pernicious rays may, however, be absorbed and the light improved by several simple contrivances. The glass chimneys for lamps may with advantage be tinted with a pale blue; or shades coloured blue and simply "faded," not varnished, on the

inner side may be used. A great deal also depends upon the position of the light; it should never, if possible, be placed in front of the eyes.

R. T. R. feels desirous of entering on a correspondence with a young lady, with a view to matrimony. Stands 9 ft. 10 in. is studying for the profession of civil engineer, and should like the young lady to be handsome, accomplished, of good birth, and able to play the piano and sing, as he is fond of music.

ANY would like to correspond, with a view to matrimony, with any gentleman, tall, dark, and of a loving disposition, not under twenty, and able to keep a wife comfortably. Is nineteen years of age, 5 ft. 5 in. in height, with brown hair, dark blue eyes, regular features, good-looking, good tempered, and thoroughly domesticated. *Curtis* exchanged.

A YOUNG WIDOW LADY, tall, of good appearance, possessing a handsomely-furnished house and carriage, with a liberal income, would like a matrimonial introduction to a gentleman, who must be tall, have moustaches, be well educated, and distinguished. "Pioneer" (No 92) might suit; but preliminary receipt of *carte de visite* desired.

HARVEY SKEGLEY offers himself as a candidate for matrimony. Is very affectionate; and must have an affectionate wife, domesticated, educated, and intellectual, not handsome, but tolerably pretty, about 5 ft. 3 or 4 in. in height, and good tempered. He states himself to be not bad-looking, about 5 ft. 7 in. in height, with dark hair, black whiskers and moustache, fair complexion, and possessed of a moderate income.

REARICE.—Flowers of sulphur mixed in a little milk, rubbed into the skin, will keep it soft and render the complexion clear. The mixture should be allowed to stand an hour or two before required, and the milk only applied (without disturbing the sulphur). It is to be used, before washing; and a winglassful made fresh on each occasion will suffice. (Handwriting very elegant.)

THE ARSENITE.

How tender his tones were,
 How loving and sweet—
 When he was beside me,
 My bliss was complete!
 I thought not of parting,
 And nothing did fear,
 For he was beside me—
 My own love was here.

But now I'm alone,
 My joy is all gone,
 The moments pass sadly,
 The days they drag on;
 In silence I weep
 For my loved one so dear;
 Oh, happy—thrice happy—
 If he were but here!

Oh, take him a message
 Of love's sweet emotion!
 Ye bright dawning sunbeams,
 Rehearse my devotion!
 And as ye play round him,
 Whisper low in his ear,
 That his darling is sad,
 For he is not here!

In language the strongest,
 Oh, urge his returning!
 The lamp of his love
 Is radiantly burning;
 Yet lacks it the blending
 The sweet thrilling cheer,
 Which softly beams forth
 When my dear one is here.

ALICE.

MARY GOODALL.—A similar question was answered as to the legal liability for debts contracted during minority in No. 92. (See reply to "Sorrowing Gladly.")

F. W. S.—We do not see how you can replace the Crimsan medal which you have lost. The suggested expedient of purchasing somebody else's medal and having it altered to suit your own certificate is ingenious.

R. T. R.—No distinction exists between lodgers and other tenants as to the payment of their rent, or depriving them of possession. The goods of lodgers are liable to distress for arrears of rent while they are on the premises.

S. H. C., who is twenty-two years of age, has dark hair and eyes, is good tempered, intelligent, and highly respectable, has a warm and loving heart, a nice comfortable home, with a good and highly-respectable business, from which he receives a good income, and would like to correspond matrimonially with any amiable, educated young lady, equal in position to himself, from eighteen to twenty years of age.

EDITH HASTINGS would like to meet with an eligible partner for life, who must be about twenty years of age, and of medium height; looks of no consequence, provided he has blue eyes, and is a gentleman in manner and appearance. "Edith" is nineteen years of age, rather fair complexioned, pretty, of medium height, of a very affectionate disposition, and very respectably connected. *Curtis* de *visite* desired.

CRANO, a young farmer, twenty-eight years of age, with black whiskers and moustache, dark eyes, tall, of many appearance, and in every sense calculated to make a good husband, previously to leaving England for Australia desires a matrimonial introduction to a young lady (or widow), not over his own age, handsome in person, intellectual in mind, thoroughly domesticated, possessed of a little money, and prepared to accompany him to his destination. *Curtis* de *visite* required.

A. E. W., who is twenty-one years of age, with rather slight figure, light brown hair, expressive blue eyes, lady-like, educated, domesticated, and very highly connected, wishes to correspond with a gentleman, with a view to matrimony. The gentleman should be from twenty-two to twenty-six years of age, dark, good-looking, and with sufficient income to maintain a wife. "A. E. W." would on her part endeavour to render his home in every respect a happy one.

URBAN.—Little is clearly known of St. Valentine, the pious and zealous priest whose name has been associated with the epistolary productions of St. Valentine's-day. He was one of the early Christians, and suffered a cruel death for his faith under the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius Claudius, on the 14th February, A.D. 270. Not long after his death he was canonized; a church was subsequently built at Rome in his memory, and one of the gates of the Eternal City was called the Porta Valentinian in his honour. His remains are said to be interred in a church at Rome.

ALPHA.—The following is a recipe for making very superior ginger-beer: White sugar, five pounds; lemon juice, one quarter of a pint; honey, one quarter of a pound; ginger, bruised, five ounces; water, four gallons and a half. Boil the ginger in three quarts of water for half an hour, then add the sugar, and lemon-juice, and honey, with the remainder of the water, and simmer through a cloth, when cold, add a quarter of the white of an egg and a small teaspoonful of essence of lemon; let the whole stand four days, and bottle. This will make 100 bottles; it will keep many months, but must remain, when bottled, rather longer than usual time before being opened.

L. B., who is eighteen, dark brown wavy hair, grey eyes, regular features, middle height, and very gentle in appearance, is fond of music, singing, and dancing, possessing knowledge of French, German, and Italian, wishes to correspond, with a view to matrimony, with a gentleman, who must be tall, dark, not under twenty-two, and well educated. A town gentleman preferred. "L. B." will receive £500 on her marriage.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.—"Messrs" wishes to correspond with "Lilian," with a view to matrimony. Is a very accomplished vocalist, has a fortune of £400 a year, is considered very good-looking, has hazel eyes, brown hair, is 4 in. in height, and twenty-one years of age. "S. L. A." has no objection to accept "F. H."s matrimonial proposal of age, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, good-looking, with very dark, curly hair, laughing dark eyes, a lively disposition, has been well educated, and can play the piano and sing nicely. "L. O. U." would feel happy to exchange *carte de visite* with "Miss L. B." Is of rather dark complexion, affectionate in disposition, and would make a good husband. "Bliss San" begs to offer himself for the consideration of "Dewdrop." Is twenty-three years of age, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, fair complexion, of business habits, pleasing in manner, of kindly disposition, and feels confident he would make a good and loving husband. (Handwriting good). "Boppo" will be happy to make the acquaintance of "Virginia," with a view to matrimony. In few years her senior, of quiet domestic habits, and very good-tempered. "Alfred H." avows himself greatly flattered by the response of "Lily H." to "Highland Jockie," and "Louie K." but feels a great difficulty in making a choice. It would assist him, he states, if the ladies were further disposed to favour him by forwarding their *carte de visite*. "D. E. M." would be glad to commence a matrimonial correspondence with "Robin Hood." Is twenty-seven years of age, rather pale, below the medium height, of an affectionate and cheerful disposition, and thinks she would make a good and careful wife. *Curtis* requested. "Robin Hood" offers himself to the occupation of "Virginia." Is a tradesman, employing about twenty assistants in his business, and in personal appearance is dark, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, stout in proportion, and will, forward *carte de visite* if required; moreover, as an irresistible inducement, "Robin Hood," as a wedding-gift, will present "Virginia" with Ten London Readers, beautifully bound, from its commencement. "Grapho," who is 5 ft. 10 in. in height, thirty-two years of age, possessing average intelligence, and an income which would admit of keeping a comfortable home, would be happy to correspond matrimonially with "Virginia." *Curtis* to be exchanged. "Perovial" would much like to hear further from "Lilian," with a view to matrimony. He is an officer in the army, fair, of the medium height, thirty-two years of age, and possessing an income of £200 a year. *Curtis* de *visite* exchanged, if "Lilian" is agreeable. "Florence" would like to correspond with "A. H. G." with a view to matrimony. Is 5 ft. 3 in. in height, of fair complexion, has dark brown hair and hazel eyes, and on her wedding-day will have a fortune of £500. "Lucy" will be pleased to correspond with "T. R. H." with a view to matrimony. Is 5 ft. 4 in. in height, of a kind and loving disposition, and on her wedding-day will have £300. "Zillah" is willing to receive matrimonial overtures from "John" (No. 87) or "Bojannan." Is sixteen years of age, tall and fair, with golden brown hair and blue eyes; has received a good education; can speak French, play the piano, and sing very well; is also domesticated, and confident of becoming a good wife. When of age, "Zillah" will have a fortune of £1,500. *Curtis* de *visite* to be exchanged. (The handwriting is very fair.) "Dorcas" desires a matrimonial introduction to a gentleman and locality from the aspersions of "Lily" and "Violet," and states that the young ladies there are so unapproachable that the gentlemen are too timid to address them. For himself, he would be happy to receive a matrimonial introduction to "Violet." Is twenty-five years of age, of medium height, having whiskers and moustache, dark brown hair, is an engineer by profession, and of a highly respectable family, with very good expectations. "Amelia" has no objection to receive, as a matrimonial preliminary, the *carte* of "K. W. M." and will send her in return. "Plain John" would be glad to correspond matrimonially with "Minnie C." or "Virginia." Is thirty years of age, tall and dark, has a comfortable home, a business of his own, and is heir to property. "A. B. C." who is a widower, is ready to assume the chain of command with "Virginia," and he considers himself qualified to discharge the duties of a wife. *Curtis* exchanged, if required. "H. L. G." a captain and owner in the merchant service, thinks "Blanche" the beau ideal of a wife, and would like to hear further from her. In twenty-one years of age, tall, with brown hair and whiskers, considered good-looking, and does not require money, having a sufficient "Laura" will be most happy to exchange *carte de visite* with "Lonely James." "A. C. R." who is 5 ft. 8 in. in height, dark, and handsome, and having the rank of first officer in the merchant service, would be delighted to correspond and exchange *cartes* with "Lilian," with a view to matrimony. (Handwriting bold, but not good, the thick strokes being very much too heavy.)—In answer to "Boris," "Mervale" states that he is thirty years of age, 5 ft. 8 in. in height, of a very amiable disposition, and would gladly correspond and exchange *cartes* with "Boris," with a view to matrimony. "Vaughan Seymour" would like to correspond matrimonially with "Isabel Wilton." Is twenty-six years of age, 5 ft. 11 in. in height, very dark complexioned, well educated, most respectably connected, and has a salary of £500 a year as cashier in a bank. "Bess" and "Lilian" would like to hear further particulars from "A. G." and "J. G.," whose *cartes de visite* are requested.

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